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Editor's letter



Following two postponements, first in May 2020 and again in May 2021, it's exciting to have the RHS Chelsea Flower Show ahead of us this month. This will be the first time in its 108-year history that the show hasn't been held in May. What a fantastic opportunity to showcase another season's planting, to discover new nurseries that specialise in late-flowering plants, and consider how our attitudes to our gardens have developed as a result of the rigours of the past 18 months.

We highlight some of the most exciting gardens to feature at this year's show, talking to the designers about their show gardens and the late-summer planting palette now open to them – tawny grasses, jewel-like dahlias, bright heleniums and blazing rudbeckias. There are bound to be new favourites too.

In addition to new categories that include balcony gardens and container schemes, the RHS is highlighting current global concerns around climate change. We hear from designer Marie-Louise Agius about the RHS COP26 Garden and how we can respond as an industry and as individuals.

Elsewhere in the issue, we visit a garden in Somerset, first featured in the magazine some 20 years ago. It's unusual for us to return to a garden, but creator Patricia Stainton has recently reconsidered her own approach to become more inclusive of the wider landscape. In Devon, we visit the tiny Totnes pocket park championed by Richard Reynolds (better known as the Guerilla Gardener) to highlight the need, even in rural settings, for a shared space for the community to gather and enjoy.

I hope you enjoy the issue,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Sorrel Everton'.

SORREL EVERTON, ACTING EDITOR



Guerilla gardener, Richard Reynolds has revived a beautiful community park near his home in Totnes Devon, page 64.

JASON INGRAM



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1. As rated by Willis Towers Watson. 2. MSCI All Country World Index.

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CLAIRE TAKACS



We revisit Cooks Farm in Somerset this issue to see how Patricia Stainton has developed her stunning garden, page 40.

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COVER IMAGE

Crocsmia x crocosmiiflora
'Golden Glory'
by Eva Nemeth

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- Save money when you subscribe to the digital edition of *Gardens Illustrated* – page 24
- Save 10% on plants, bulbs and seeds from Crocus[†] – page 139

[†]Offer valid for UK customers only (postcode restrictions apply).

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Suzie Gibbons
Suzie photographs Tara Macdonald's small garden, page 76. *"Plantswoman Tara has created a magical space, using wonderful plant combinations and a cornucopia of sumptuous colour."*



Ngoc Minh Ngo
US-based photographer Ngoc shoots the garden of potter Frances Palmer, page 80. *"Frances's garden is much like everything she makes, beautiful and utterly unique."*



Annie Gatti
Annie picks out the highlights of this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show, page 101. *"I'm really looking forward to seeing how this year's designers and exhibitors tackle the challenges of showing in September."*

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James Basson

James lives in the South of France where he runs Scape Design with his wife Helen, specialising in low-maintenance and dry gardens. He is a fervent advocate for creating sustainable landscapes. The winner of four Chelsea Gold medals, he was awarded Best in Show in 2017.

Fergus Garrett

Fergus was appointed head gardener at Great Dixter by Christopher Lloyd in 1993. He is passionate about passing on his knowledge through student programmes at Dixter and worldwide lectures. He was awarded an RHS Associate of Honour in 2008 and an RHS Victoria Medal of Honour in 2019.

Anna Pavord

Anna's books include her bestseller *The Tulip* and most recently *Landskipping*. For 30 years she was *The Independent's* gardening correspondent. In 2000 the RHS awarded her the Veitch Memorial Medal. She lives and gardens in Dorset.

Dan Pearson

Dan is one of the UK's best-known garden designers, familiar to many through his gardening columns in the *Observer* magazine. Eight of his gardens, including the Tokachi Millennium Forest in Japan, have won awards and he was awarded Best in Show for his garden at Chelsea in 2015.

Sarah Price

Sarah is one of the UK's most sought-after garden designers who gained worldwide recognition for her designs for the 2012 London Olympic Park. She won Gold at Chelsea in 2012 and 2018, and was GMG Garden Columnist of the Year in 2016 for her design series in *Gardens Illustrated*.

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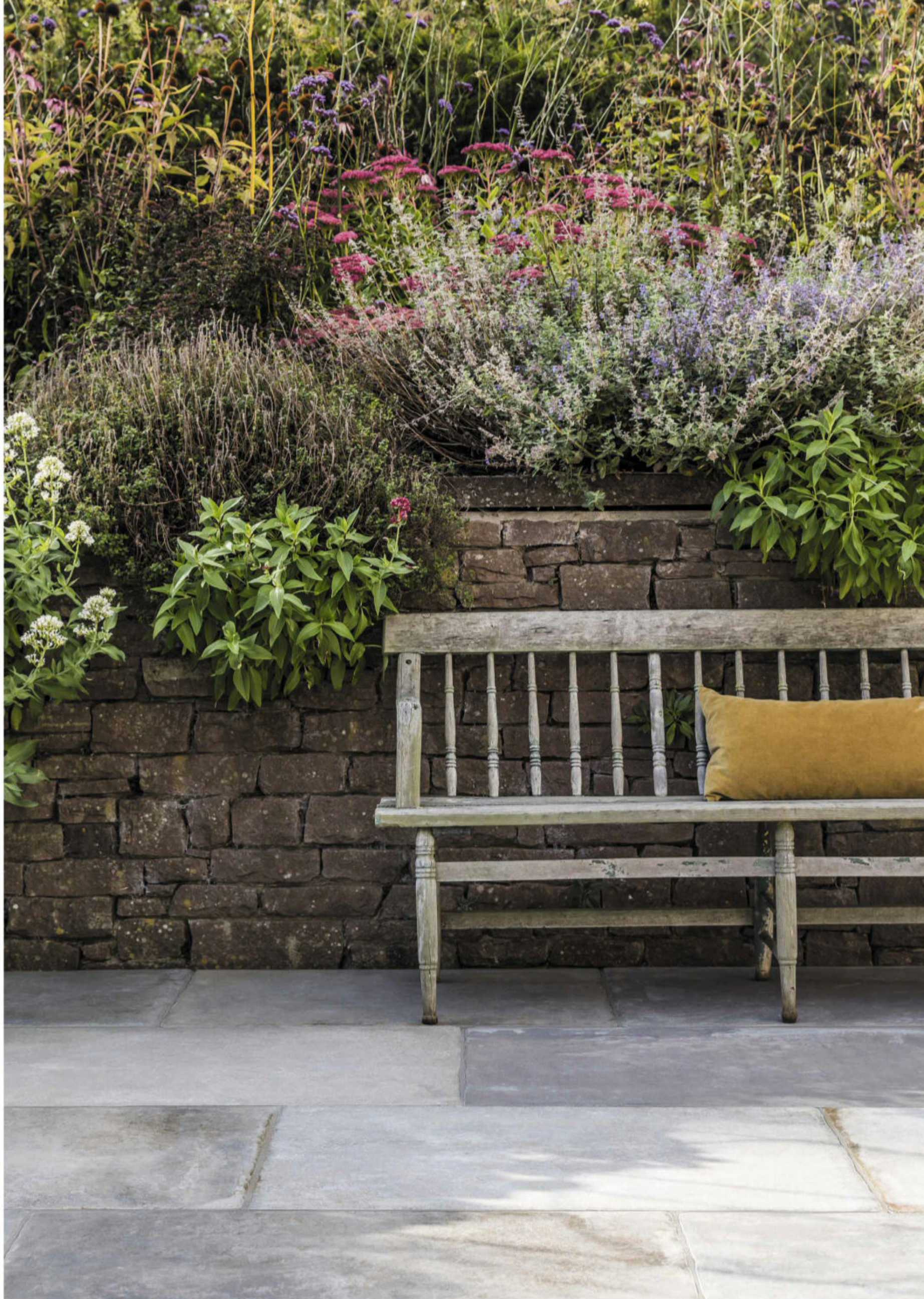
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Chédigny.

Michael Marriott has worked at David Austin Roses, designing and advising, for the past 30 years. He is an expert on all matters relating to roses, from the extensive range of cultivars and type to successful growing.



Château de Villandry.

The French Rose Garden

Join us for a five-day tour from Paris to the Loire in the company of rosarian Michael Marriott to celebrate the French rose

For 2022, our popular rose tour travels over the Channel to investigate the story of the French rose and enjoy some truly wonderful gardens and rose collections. Starting with a visit with the curator of **Roseraie du Val-de-Marne** in L'Haÿ-les-Roses, you'll come to understand more about the vast array of French roses and the development of the roses we grow in our gardens today. You will also visit collections of wild roses; a specialist rose nursery producing beautiful new roses each year; a village overflowing with roses; a fairy-tale chateau where the discerning owner has surrounded her home with sumptuous roses; as well as some intimate private gardens where roses steal the show. This is an unmissable opportunity to stroll from rose to rose discussing the merits of under-planting, mulching, pruning, budding, training, and even 'the name of the rose' in the company of a great rose enthusiast and expert. We will stay one night at **Hôtel Les Pléiades**, in the village of Barbizon, before travelling down to the Loire to **Hôtel Le Choiseul** in Amboise. Both hotels offer good food, local wines and convivial Gallic hospitality.

30 MAY – 3 JUNE 2022

EVENT DETAILS

Price per person, based on two people sharing is £3,280 (a single supplement of £250 is levied by the hotels).

The price includes: one night with dinner at Hôtel Les Pléiades, Barbizon and three nights at Hôtel Le Choiseul, Amboise, bed & breakfast and dinner with wine included; five lunches; return tickets on Eurostar and all transport during the tour. If you wish to travel independently to join the tour at Paris, Gare du Nord, please deduct £80 and contact the office to discuss joining arrangements. The price does not include extras or travel insurance.

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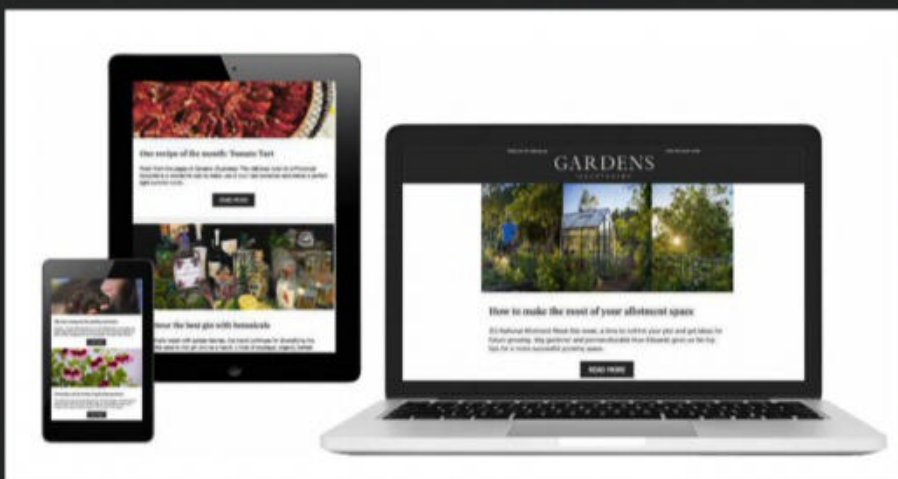
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The *Gardens Illustrated* newsletter

Sign up to our weekly newsletter and the world's most beautiful gardens as well as gardening and design advice will arrive in your inbox every Wednesday.



The RHS Chelsea Flower Show

Our Chelsea newsletter will bring you insights from designers and experts on the gardens and products to look out for, as well as daily news throughout the show.



Kitted Out

Our fortnightly Kitted Out newsletter brings you news of our experts' picks of all the best gardening gear – from gardening gloves to greenhouses.



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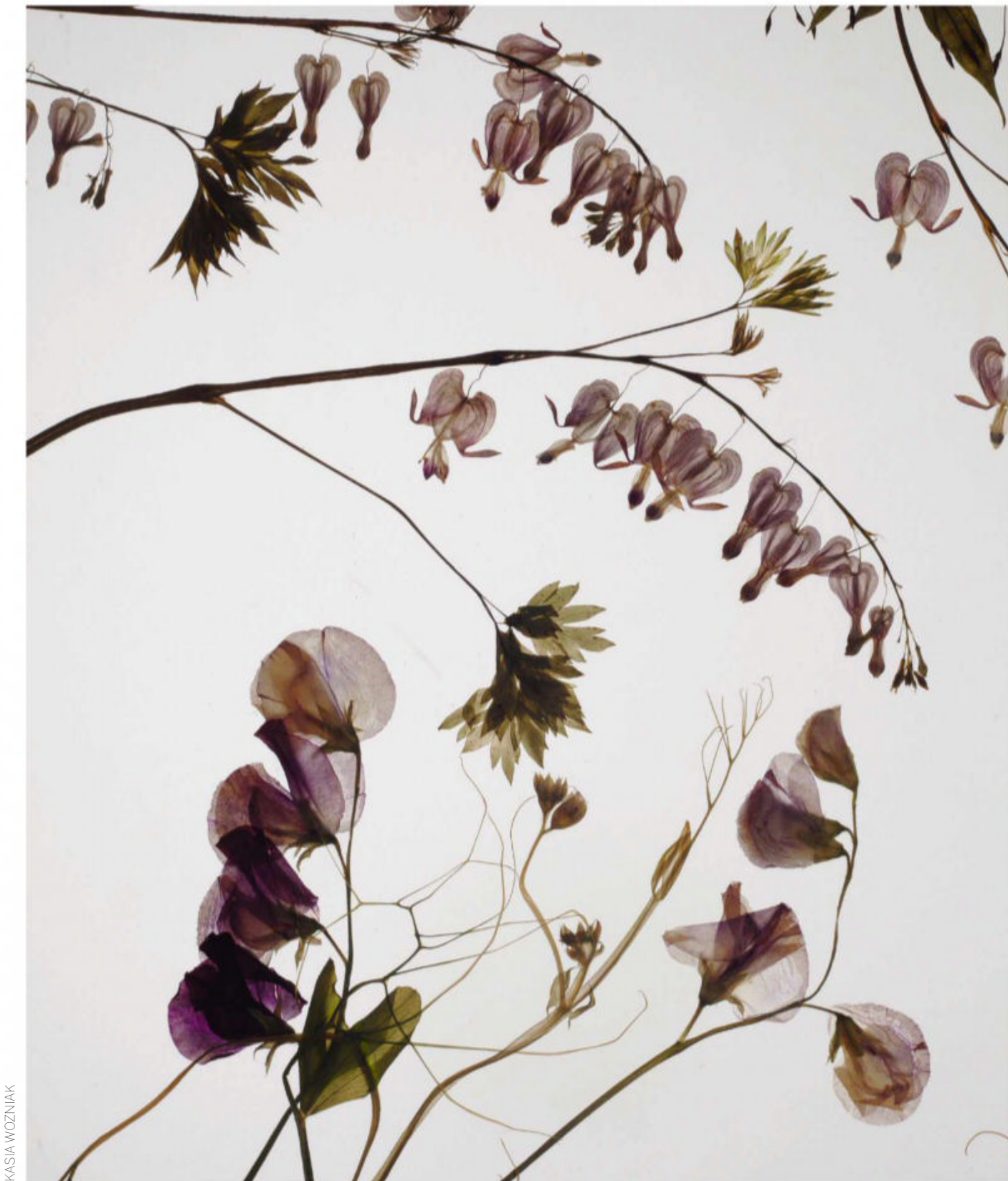
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DIG IN

What's happening, what's in flower and what to buy this month



KASIA WOZNIAK

Floral finesse

A September date isn't the only change to this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show. A new Floristry & Floral Design Competition combines the Florist of the Year and Floral Arrangement competitions and will take centre stage in the Great Pavilion. Under an overall concept of 'Our World', the designs will focus on four themes: Pollination and the Beauty of Nature, in which the larger floral installations will compete, and British Blooms and Preservation, which include smaller designs filling floral windows. Trudie Easton's imaginative interpretation of the use of healing plants in medicine, which features a tree spiralling upwards, like a strand of DNA, will compete in the Beauty of Nature category. In the Preservation category, JamJar Edit, known for its stunning pressed flowers (above) will create an illuminated window display. JamJar is also transforming the showground's Bull Ring Gate with a design inspired by the meadows at Cotswold hotel Thyme. [rhs.org.uk](https://www.rhs.org.uk)

News

COMPILED BY KATIE BEALE

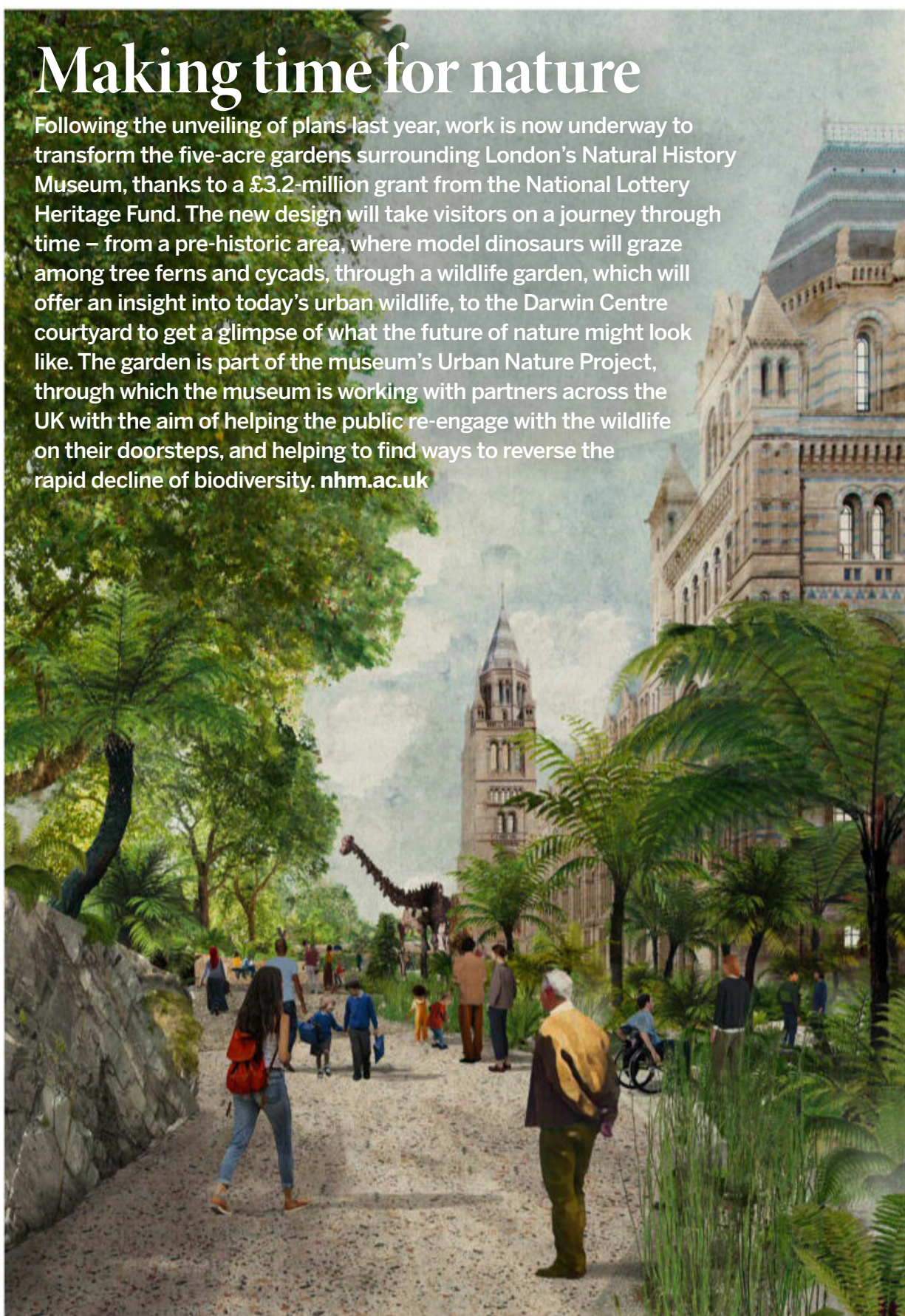


Bright future

It may seem a little premature to be planning next year's summer borders, even before the last of this year's swallows has packed its bags, but the new range of seeds for Suttons has some eye-catching options to plant out in spring for stunning borders come summer. Among those to look out for are Helianthus annuus 'Tiger's Eye' (above), a bi-coloured sunflower with a ring of orange ray florets whose tips are almost yellow, and Eschscholzia californica 'Lady Marmalade', a Californian poppy, with fragrant, double flowers that resemble a rose and are a big draw for bees and hoverflies. Sunflower seeds cost £3.99 for 12, while the poppy seeds are £2.99 for 130. Find these and the full range at [suttons.co.uk](https://www.suttons.co.uk)

Making time for nature

Following the unveiling of plans last year, work is now underway to transform the five-acre gardens surrounding London's Natural History Museum, thanks to a £3.2-million grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The new design will take visitors on a journey through time – from a pre-historic area, where model dinosaurs will graze among tree ferns and cycads, through a wildlife garden, which will offer an insight into today's urban wildlife, to the Darwin Centre courtyard to get a glimpse of what the future of nature might look like. The garden is part of the museum's Urban Nature Project, through which the museum is working with partners across the UK with the aim of helping the public re-engage with the wildlife on their doorsteps, and helping to find ways to reverse the rapid decline of biodiversity. [nhm.ac.uk](https://www.nhm.ac.uk)



WILD AT HEART

Wakehurst, Kew's wild botanic garden in West Sussex, is embarking on its most ambitious project yet, to create a six-acre American Prairie. With advice from the American expert in prairie restoration Larry Weaner, Wakefield's horticultural team will sow 12 million seeds and plant more than 50,000 live plants from around 110 different species. When complete, the prairie will be a valuable resource for vital research by the Royal Botanic Garden, Kew, into threatened prairie ecosystems. [kew.org](https://www.kew.org)

JIM HOLDEN



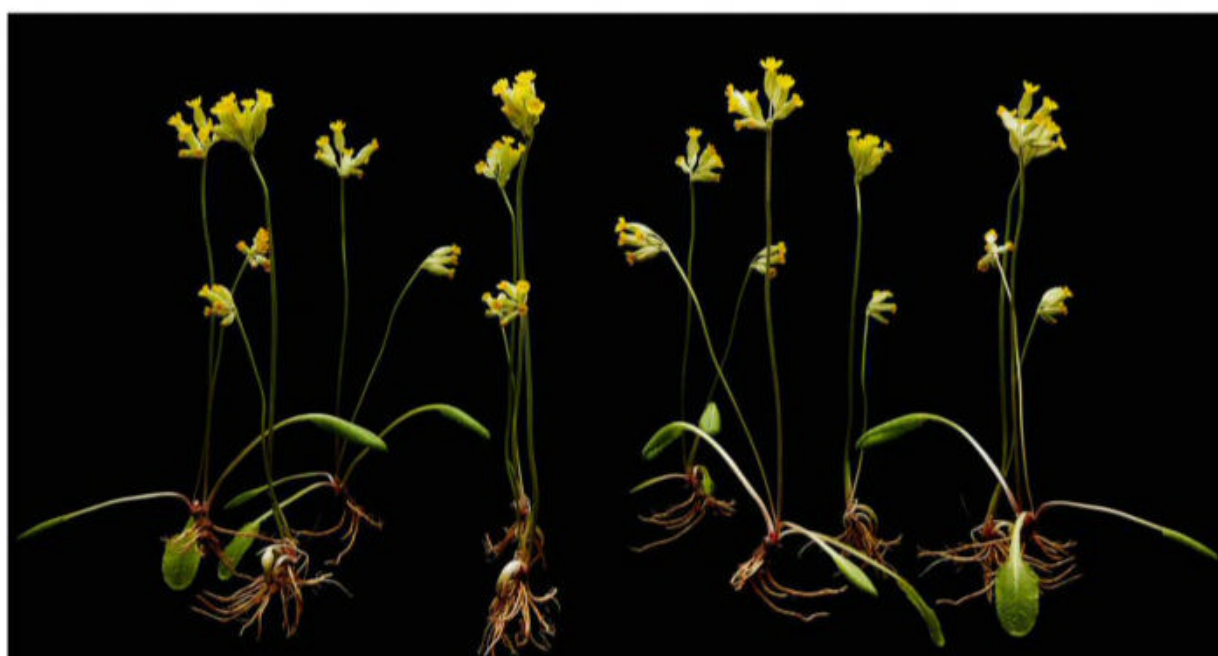
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Peat-free now

News that the government will ban the sale of peat-based compost by 2024 has been welcomed by many gardeners, but if you want to end the cutting of peat now there's much you can do from choosing only plants grown in peat-free compost to using a peat-free alternative in your own garden. Fertile Fibre has been producing peat-free compost for more than 30 years with a range of peat-free, organic coir compost that is packed with nutrients. Its Organic Multipurpose Compost starts at £9.60 for a 10L bag. Find the full range at fertilefibre.com



Beauty of wildflowers

When in 2012 the conservation charity Plantlife published its *Vanishing Flora* report, which highlighted the dramatic loss of wildflowers across the UK, it inspired its Patron HRH The Prince of Wales to call for the creation of a series of Coronation Meadows to celebrate The Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Images of the resulting new meadows, together with their wildflowers, from glorious orchids to humble cowslips (above), formed the basis of photographer Hugo Rittson-Thomas's beautiful recent book *Wildflowers for the Queen*, and are now on view in a new exhibition at the Garden Museum. Until 17 October, entry included in museum admission. gardenmuseum.org.uk

HUGO RITTSO-THOMAS



VIRTUAL ESCAPE

Google Arts & Culture has launched a new online resource, Gardens United, which offers the chance to explore 50 gardens across the UK from anywhere in the world. From Tresco in the Isles of Scilly to Balmoral in the Scottish Highlands, Gardens United draws on a huge archive of videos, images and Google Street View tours of gardens including The Alnwick Garden (left), and offers online talks on topics ranging from wellbeing to urban gardening. artsandculture.google.com/project/uk-gardens

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DIARY

COMPILED BY KATIE BEALE, EMILY MALES AND ANNIE GATTI

1 Late Summer Hand Tied Bouquet

Learn how to create a relaxed, hand-tied bouquet using the best seasonal flowers and foliage in this online demonstration by Somerset-based flower grower Georgie Newbery. 17 September, 5pm. £35. commonfarmflowers.com

2 Harrogate Autumn Flower Show

Find prize-winning, gargantuan vegetables and floral art displays at the North of England Horticultural Society's Autumn Flower Show, held in the beautiful gardens of Newby Hall. The show also includes garden installations, talks and demonstrations and a flower market offering the chance to buy plants from some of the UK's top nurseries. 17-19 September, 9.30am-5.30pm. £22. Newby Hall & Gardens, Skelton-on-Ure, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 5AE. Tel 01423 648212, flowershow.org.uk

3 Online Masterclass: Year-Round Colour in Your Garden

Sign up for the third of *Gardeners' World* magazine's four masterclasses on how to plan for year-round colour in your garden. Suitable both for beginners and more experienced gardeners, the course is hosted by the magazine's associate editor David Hurron and gardening editor Emma Crawforth. 24 September, 12pm. £15. gardenersworld.com

4 Malvern Autumn Show

Discover specialist nurseries and impressive floral displays at this new autumn garden show, which will also feature a celebration of both traditional and modern orchards from apples to damsons. 24-26 September, 9am-6pm. £18. Three Counties Showground, Malvern, Worcestershire WR13 6NW. Tel 01684 584 900, malvernautumn.co.uk

5 Garden Masterclass with Neil Lucas

Learn how grasses and perennials can form a near-perfect partnership in the modern garden on this one-day masterclass at the National Botanic Garden of Wales led by Neil Lucas of Knoll Gardens. 29 September, 10am-4.30pm. £130. Middleton Hall, Llanarthne, Carmarthenshire SA32 8HN. gardenmasterclass.org

6 Garden Design at Allt-y-bela

Join Kristy Ramage, creative director at Arne Maynard Garden Design, on this one-day course at Arne's private garden in Monmouthshire. The study day, held in aid of gardeners' charity Perennial, will talk you through schemes and border combinations with head gardener Fay Sizer and plant designer Elke Maynard before spending the afternoon creating your own border design. 30 September, 9.45am-5pm. £230. Allt-y-bela, Usk, Monmouthshire NP15 1EZ. Tel 07892 403103, perennial.org.uk

7 Wellness Community Garden Competition

Don't miss the chance to design a wellness community garden as part of a new competition from The Landscape Show in collaboration with the London College of Garden Design and MIND Birmingham. The competition is open to anyone working as a garden designer, landscape architect or horticulturist, as well as to students on a professional-level course. Deadline for entries is 1 October. landscapeshow.co.uk

8 Behind the Scenes at Great Dixter

Join Great Dixter gardener Jack McCoy on a guided walk around the garden to get an insight into how the borders are created and find out more about the plants used. 4 October, 1.30-4.15pm. £45. Great Dixter Charitable Trust, Northiam, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6PH. Tel 01797 252878, greatdixter.co.uk

9 Micro Herbs and Edible Flowers Workshop

Discover how to grow seasonal shoots, leaves and flowers, and pair them with delicious dishes on this one-day course at the Raymond Blanc Gardening School. 5 October, 9am-3.30pm. £205, includes lunch. Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons, Church Road, Great Milton, Oxfordshire OX44 7PD. Tel 01844 278881, belmond.com

10 Gardening With Perennials

Book now for this one-day ecological gardening workshop at the Northern School of Permaculture on how to design edible and medicinal polycultures by combining trees, fruit bushes and other perennials. 16 October, 10am-4pm. £36. 1 Summerbottom, Broadbottom, Hyde, Tameside, Greater Manchester SK14 6BP. northernschool/info

All information is correct at time of going to press, but may be subject to change.

Tickets for most events will be limited to ensure social distancing and must be booked in advance.

Please be sure to check all opening times and advice on any local travel restrictions before travelling.

COMMON FARM FLOWERS



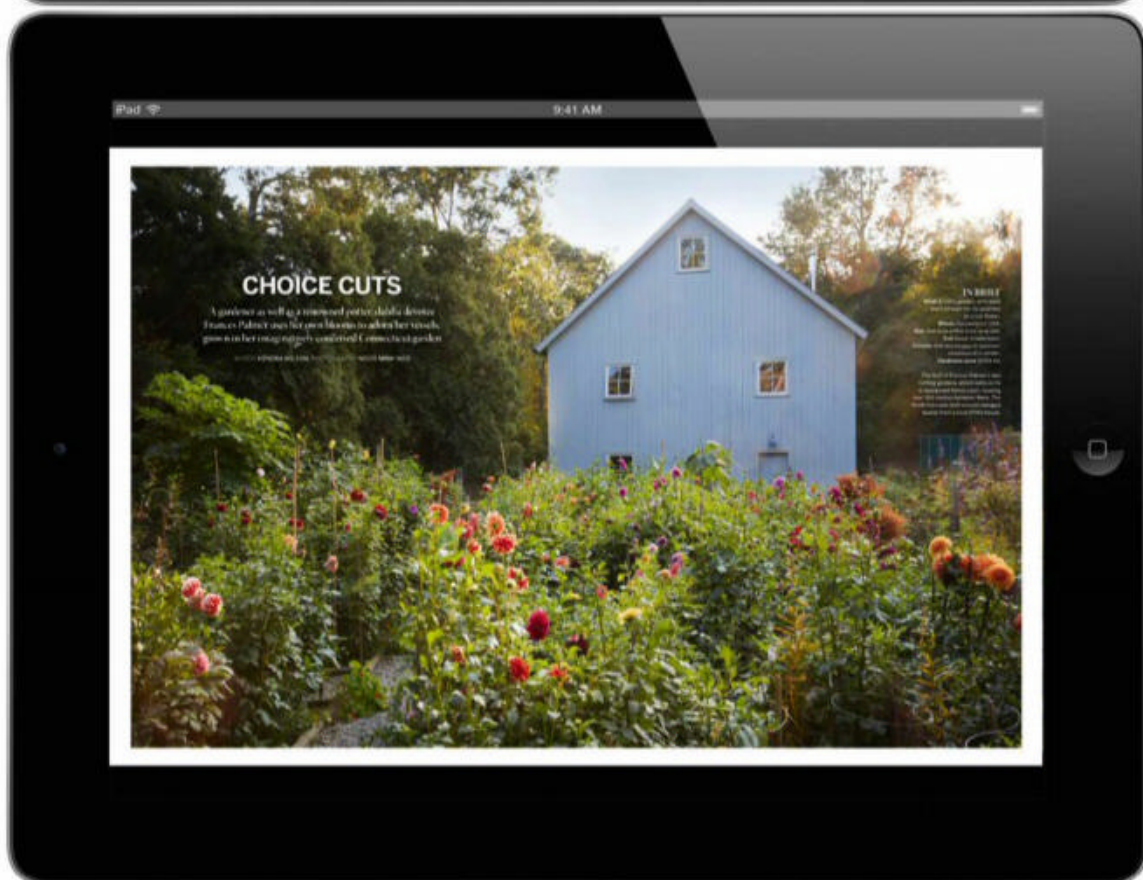
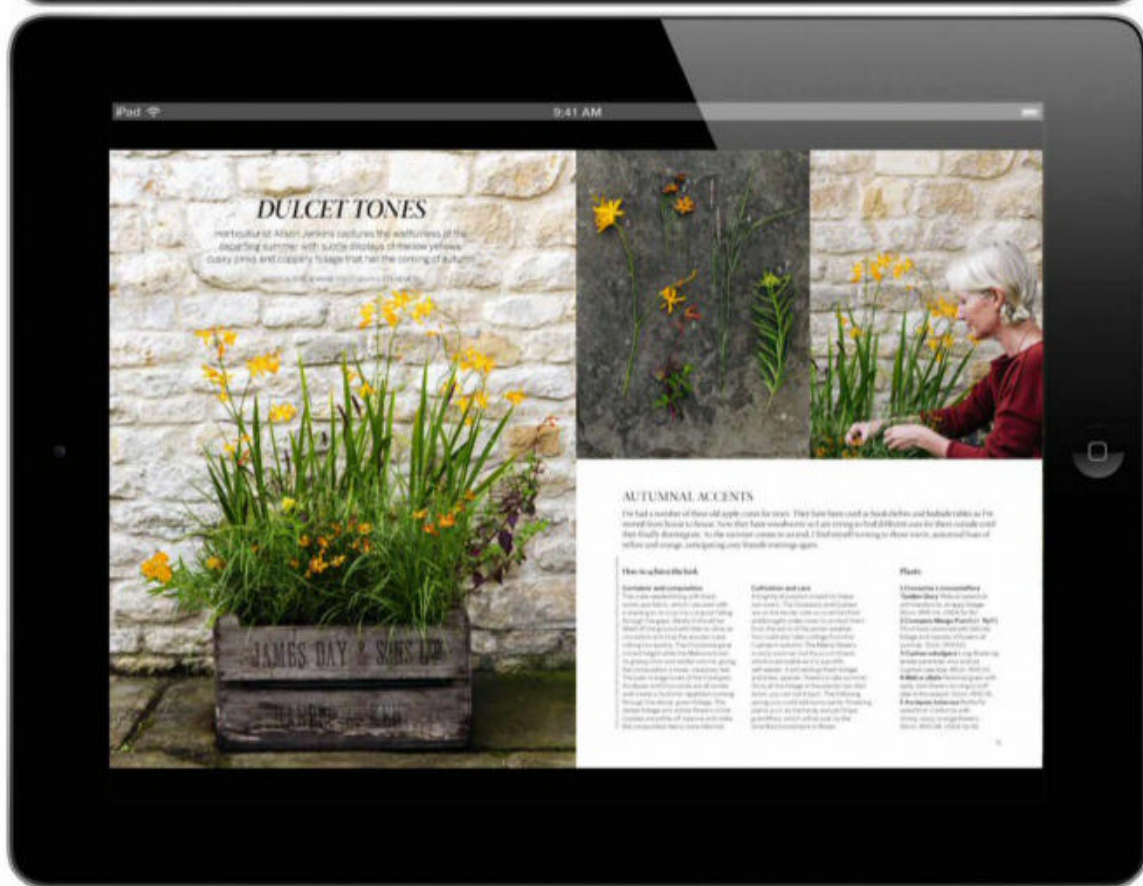
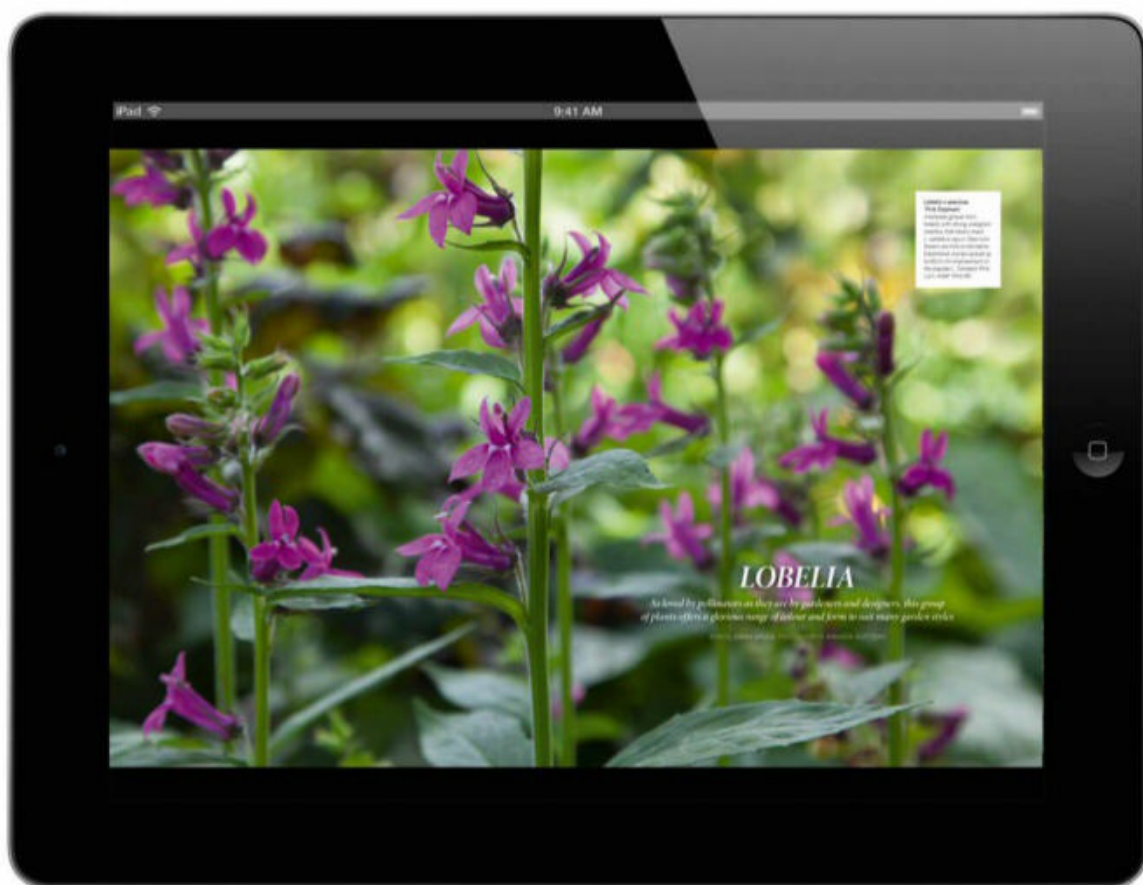
JASON NGRAM

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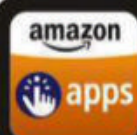
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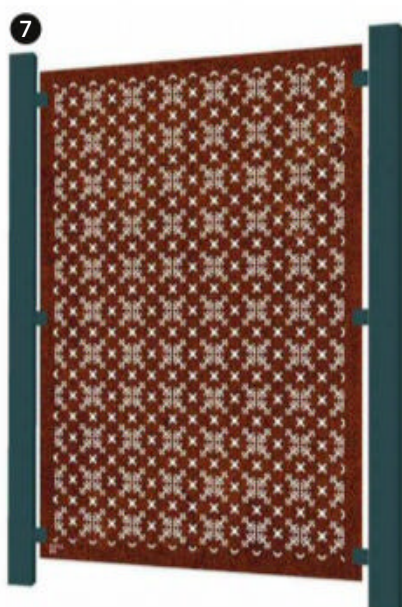
* See website for terms

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COMPILED BY KATIE BEALE AND EMILY MALES

MAIN IMAGES PHILIP SOWELS



1. Relaxound Lakesidebox Motion Sensor, birch, £55, 01531 631044, husandhem.co.uk **2. OMBRE Metal and Fabric Gazebo**, anthracite grey, £280.50, maisonsdumonde.com **3. LivePicture GO Tree Box**, white, £128, treebox.co.uk **4. Corten Steel Reflective Water Pool**, 60x14cm, £105, 0345 605 2505, worm.co.uk **5. Chastleton Day Bed**, reclaimed teak, 85x164x91cm, £900, 01993 845559, gardentrading.co.uk **6. Isla Hanging Tealight Hurricane**, £25, 01872 223220, nordichouse.co.uk **7. RHS Parterre Corten Steel Fence Panel**, 178x119cm, £474, 01737 701088, starkandgreensmith.com



1. Eco Cork Yoga Mat, black, £65, **Organic Cotton Bolster**, £40, **Cork Block**, £14, **Cork Brick**, £12, all 0333 400 7777, yogamatters.com **2. Plantbox Outdoor Living Wall With Herbs**, set of five, black, £200, 01243 756240, thelittlebotanical.com **3. Standing Water Feature**, rectangular, 24x50x27.5cm, £175, 0330 333 2123, coxandcox.co.uk **4. Gloster L Shape Teak Screen**, large, 185.5x123.5x65.5cm, £3,180, 0345 605 2505, worm.co.uk **5. Kreafunk aTune DAB/Fm Radio**, black, £129, 0800 587 7645, amara.com **6. Missoni Home Windhoek Outdoor Cushion**, 30x60cm, £110, 0800 587 7645, amara.com **7. Fulbrook Rectangular Mirror**, 120x80cm, £175, 01993 845559, gardentrading.co.uk **8. Hampstead Hanging Nest Chair**, PE bamboo, £500, 01993 845559, gardentrading.co.uk



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**HELIANTHUS 'BITTER
CHOCOLATE'**

This is similar to the funky, willow-leaved, perennial sunflower *Helianthus salicifolius* but with wider leaves. For years I have grown *H. salicifolius* for its foliage, but it rarely flowers due to our cool summers, whereas *H. 'Bitter Chocolate'* flowers throughout August and September with yellow flowers that – true to the name – emit the most divine smell of chocolate. It is more upright than *H. salicifolius*, which, in my experience, tends to flop. I propagate it by division or basal cuttings in spring.

Height 2m.

Origin Garden (species North and Central America).

Conditions Moisture-retentive soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4⁺.

Season of interest August to September.



Jimi Blake is the owner creator of Hunting Brook Gardens. huntingbrook.com

September plants

Autumn may be knocking at the door, but Jimi prolongs the interest in his late-summer borders with long-flowering perennials, a quirky canna and a ghostly, cylindrical cactus

WORDS JIMI BLAKE PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM



PENNISETUM ALOPECUROIDES 'RED HEAD'

This is a selection by Brent Horvath of Intrinsic Perennial Gardens in the USA. I first saw it grown at RHS Garden Wisley a few years ago where it absolutely stole the show as the best ornamental grass. It has large, red, bottlebrush plumes that turn purple in autumn and then beige in winter. I grow plants in large pots in my polytunnel until they are in full flower in July or early August, as I can never rely on pennisetums to flower in the cool summers here at Hunting Brook. I then plant them into the garden, woven through the dahlias and late-flowering perennials. AGM*.

Height 80cm-1m.
Origin Garden (species Southeast Asia).
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3, USDA 5a-9b.
Season of interest August to November.

AGAPANTHUS 'BLACK MAGIC'

I imagine that many of you have grown agapanthus if your climate allows. I have to be honest, I had never grown them until last year, probably because I hadn't used much blue in the garden up until that point. When planning my planting design for the new sand garden, I decided it was time to give agapanthus a go. I searched for the plant with the darkest flowers on the agapanthus Facebook page and came up with *Agapanthus* 'Black Magic'. This agapanthus is derived from *A. inapertus*, characterised by pendulous flowers. It is deciduous and seems to be hardy here at Hunting Brook.

Height 80cm-1.2m.
Origin Garden (species South Africa).
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3.
Season of interest August to September.



SALVIA PATENS 'GUANJUATO'

This cultivar was discovered in 1991 near Guanajuato in Mexico and the name means 'place of frogs'. The flowers are dark blue and larger than the straight species, and it is much superior to any of the other cultivars. This is the plant that inspired me to make greater use of blues and silvers in one of my sand gardens. *Salvia patens* is a tuberous perennial that I dig up in the autumn, pot up, and leave in an unheated greenhouse over the winter. I rarely water it in winter as this can cause rotting. I propagate it by cuttings from May to July as the cuttings need to form a small tuber before winter to succeed.

Height 90cm.
Origin Mexico.
Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3.
Season of interest June to September for flowers.

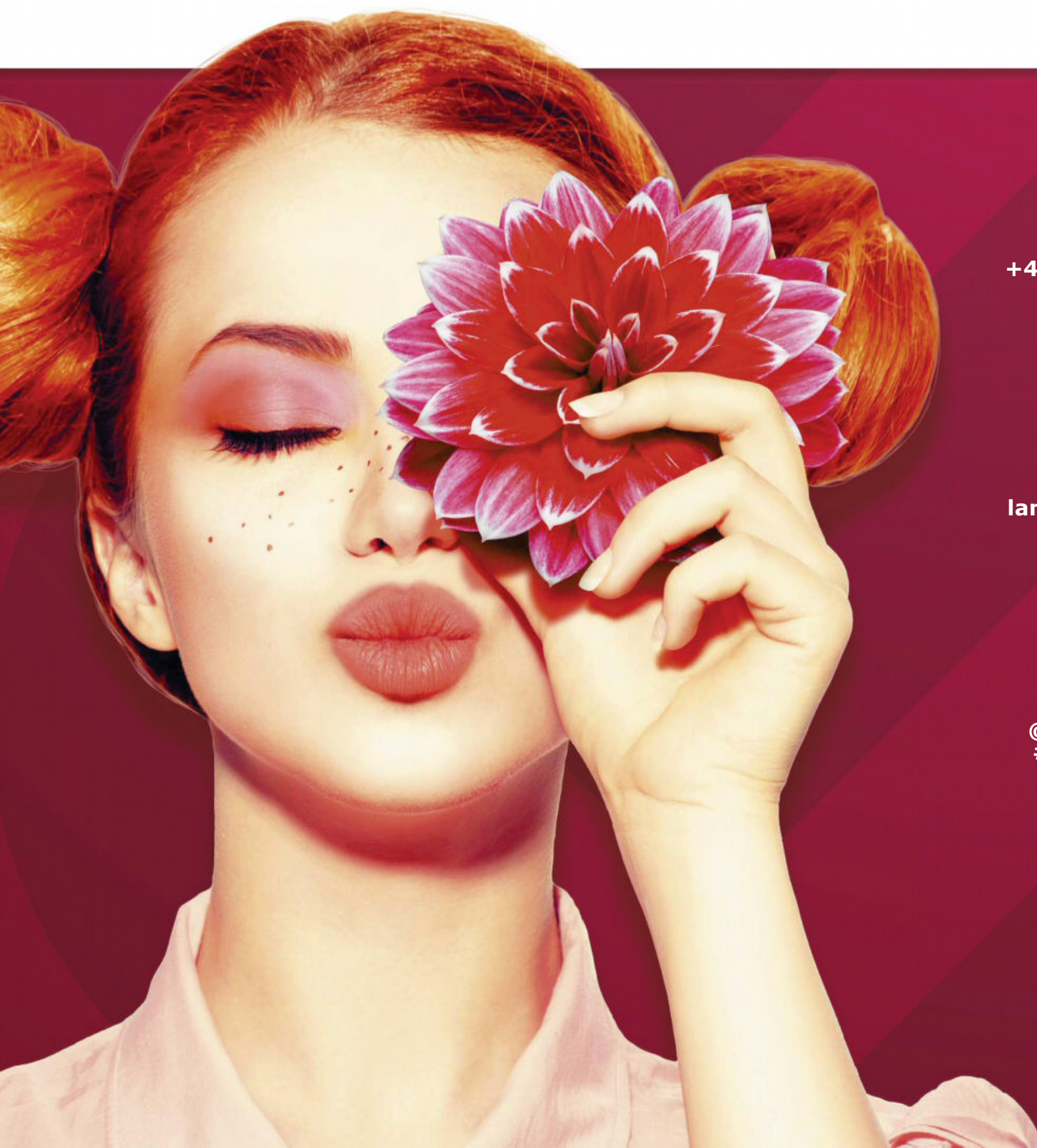
*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. Hardiness ratings given where available.



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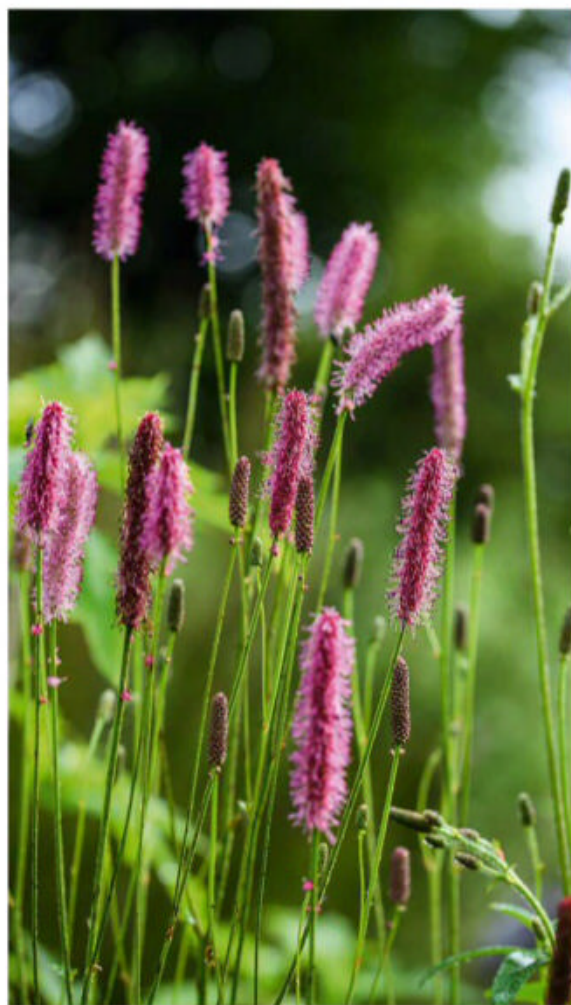
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PODACHAENIUM EMINENS

When I first saw this plant growing in the gardens at Mount Stewart in Northern Ireland, I was blown away by its spectacular, architectural foliage. Commonly known as the giant tree daisy, it comes from the highland cloud forests in Central America and Mexico. The oversized, scented leaves are similar to those of *Paulownia tomentosa* but the new growth is silver and bronze. I use it in my tropical planting each summer and bring it into the unheated glasshouse for the winter. I am delighted to say that I managed to root some cuttings last summer.

Height 80cm-1.2m.

Origin Central America and Mexico.

Conditions Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H2.

Season of interest August to September.



HEDYCHIUM WARDII

I love hedychiums but *Hedychium wardii* and *H. forrestii*, both of which are hardy at Hunting Brook, are the only forms that flower for me. Hedychiums begin their growth during the monsoon season in their native habitats. *H. wardii* has large, bright-yellow, cone-shaped flowers from August to September with a wonderful scent. I originally planted lots of hedychiums on the slopes of a valley, but it was too dry for them to grow well, so I transplanted them to a border where they now flourish. I propagate them by division in spring, or seed sown fresh in autumn.

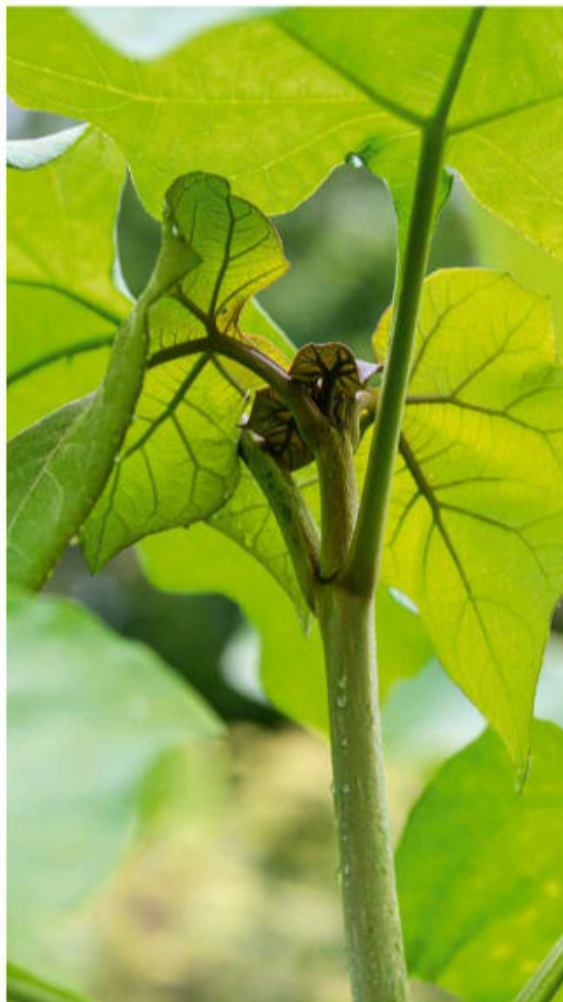
Height 1.5m

Origin Assam.

Conditions Rich, moisture-retentive soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H4.

Season of interest August to September for flowers.



SANGUISORBA 'BLACKTHORN'

I have grown many different sanguisorbas over the years but 'Blackthorn' has always remained my favourite. It has tall, robust stems with deep, reddish-pink, bottlebrush flowers that, unlike those of many other sanguisorbas, tend not to fall over. I weave it through my exotic border for the repetition of vertical flower spires in late summer and autumn. It looks at its very best when backlit by the rising or setting sun, and makes a wonderful cut flower in autumnal arrangements. I propagate it by division in spring just as it is coming into growth.

Height 1.2m.

Origin Garden.

Conditions Well-drained, moisture-retentive soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest July to November.

Places to visit

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best

Be sure to check opening times and travel restrictions. Many garden visits will need to be pre-booked.

My first visit to **Dove Cottage** in West Yorkshire was shortly after my much-loved collie dog Fred had died. I needed to be in a good nursery and to be immersed in the most beautiful garden. Dove Cottage was my first choice and my car was packed to the roof with new plants when I left. Owners Stephen and Kim Rogers have created one

of the very best naturalistic gardens in Europe with a cutting-edge collection of perennials. Most of the plants are available to buy in the superb nursery that is attached to the garden. Shibden Hall Road, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX3 9XA. Tel 01422 203553, dovecottage.nursery.co.uk **Marchants Hardy Plants** is one of my

favourite nurseries, owned by the wonderful plantsman Graham Gough and his wife Lucy. The nursery has a diverse range of plants and the garden is planted in a contemporary, naturalistic style. The plants for sale at Marchants are all propagated in the nursery and are grown in peat-free compost. 2 Marchants Cottages, Mill Lane, Laughton, East

Sussex BN8 6AJ. Tel 01323 811737, marchantshardyplants.co.uk

For many years I have made an annual pilgrimage to Nick Macer's wonderful nursery **Pan-Global Plants** and have always come away with a car-full of the choicest plants imaginable. Pan-Global has a massive range of extremely desirable, rare plants. Many of the specimens ▶

CANNA 'SÉMAPHORE'

I will never forget seeing this canna for the first time in Paloma Gardens on New Zealand's North Island. I made a note of it on my wish list and eventually managed to buy it two years ago, but it actually dates back to 1895. It has dark-bronze leaves and the most beautiful mango-orange flowers that start flowering in midsummer. Unfortunately, most cannas don't flower in our cool summers at Hunting Brook, so I grow most of them for their foliage only. I propagate my cannas by division in spring, making sure each division has a pointed growing snout.

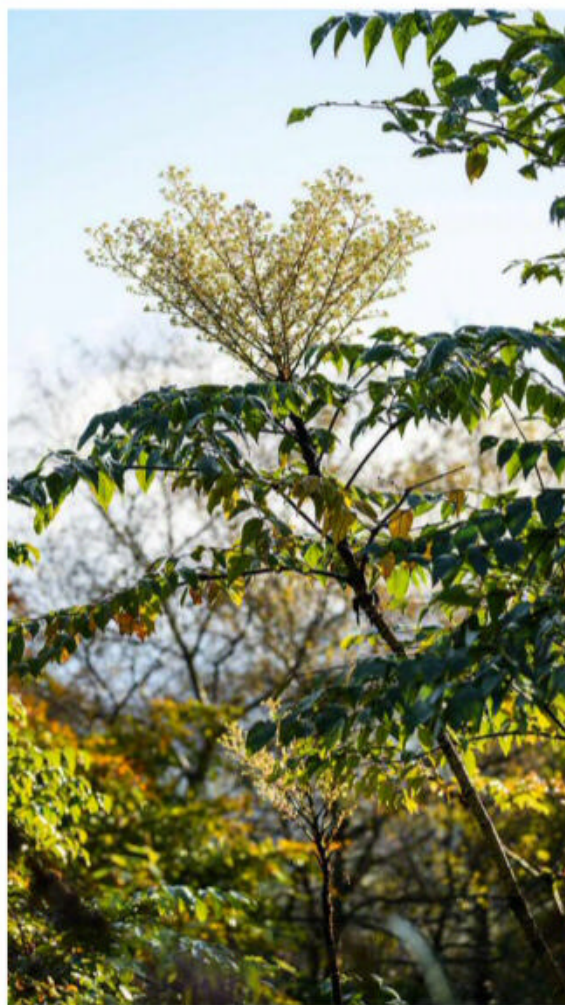
Height 80cm.

Origin Garden.

Conditions Rich, moisture-retentive soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H3.

Season of interest August to October.



CLEISTOCACTUS STRAUSII

I grew cacti as a child and only returned to growing them a few years ago in order to create a summer cactus display in the gardens at Hunting Brook. *Cleistocactus strausii*, commonly called the silver torch cactus, grows high up in the mountains in its native habitat. It is a columnar cactus with a white, woolly appearance thanks to its short, silvery spines. I grow them in my borders combined with perennials and quirky foliage plants. They grow fast in our cool, wet summers and are brought into the house for the winter. I love the unexpected look on people's faces when they see cactus happily growing in the Wicklow hills. AGM.

Height 1-1.5m.

Origin Argentina and Bolivia.

Conditions Well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H2.

Season of interest Year round.



ARALIA ECHINOCAULIS

In 2002 I went on a plant-hunting expedition in central China, following in the footsteps of plant hunter Augustine Henry, who made the journey around 100 years ago. We discovered *Aralia echinocaulis* on this trip and brought back seed. I grew it on and the resulting plants are now taller than my house and have become a signature plant at Hunting Brook. They have a light canopy so it's possible to grow sun-loving plants beneath them. They have spiky trunks when young, and spectacular, bipinnate foliage. It rarely suckers for me but if it does I pot it up to swap with friends.

Height 5m.

Origin China.

Conditions Fertile, well-drained soil; full sun.

Hardiness RHS H7.

Season of interest Year round.

▷ at Hunting Brook have been sourced from Pan-Global Plants over the years. Now all I can do now is drool over Nick's plant list and hope that some day trading restrictions will be lifted and I will be able to buy plants from the UK again. The Walled Garden, Frampton Court, Frampton on Severn, Gloucestershire GL2 7EX. Tel 01452 741641, panglobalplants.com

Windcliff, in the Pacific Northwest of the USA, is the home and garden and one of my gardening heroes Dan Hinkley and his partner Robert. Dan has had a huge influence on my gardening life, having introduced me to so many new and wonderful plants. I have had the privilege of twice visiting Windcliff, which contains a huge range of diverse plants, including many

introductions from Dan's plant-hunting expeditions. The garden is open occasionally and is well worth a visit. Visit Dan's website to find details of how to arrange a visit to the garden. danieljhinkley.com

Ardán Garden, on Howth Head, just north of Dublin, is only about a 40-minute drive from my own garden at Hunting

Brook, so if you come to visit me you can easily make a detour to Ardán on the same day. This coastal, hillside garden is artistically tended by Nuala Doherty and Conall O'Caoimh. Their use of vibrant colours in the perennial borders and exotic garden is like a painting that I wish I could buy. Conall's sculptures, which are exhibited throughout the site, are also

offered for sale. Ardán is one of 14 private gardens (including my own and my sister June's) that make up the Dublin Garden Trail. If you are in the area, I would recommend you take a look at some of the others too. Full details are on the website below. Windgate Road, Howth, Co Dublin, Ireland D13 K718. Tel +353 (0)87 972 4271, dublingardengroup.com



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FRUITFUL FEELING

With plants still cropping – artichokes and tomatoes among them – Aaron anticipates the apple season, sows winter herbs and plants out fennel to avoid bolting

WORDS AARON BERTELSEN ILLUSTRATION ALICE PATTULLO

I always feel a sense of excitement and anticipation in September. Even when the weather remains balmy, the misty mornings and cool evenings are a harbinger of autumn, my favourite season in the garden. It is the time for harvesting, but it is also the time to start looking forward to the next growing season.

I often find my thoughts turning to apples – both the picking and the planting. It is a subject close to the heart of my friend Tom Coward at Gravetye Manor, who grows an amazing range of cultivars. If you are thinking of planting a tree, this is the perfect time to place your order to ensure you get the widest possible choice. There are some excellent specialist growers out there, offering an extraordinary range, including heirloom types that have been grown for hundreds of years. Just remember that if you are planning to grow a tree in a pot, it must be on dwarfing rootstock, and unless the tree is self-fertile you must ensure there is another tree nearby that will flower at the right time to facilitate cross-pollination. Otherwise you will be waiting a long time for your fruit.

What to sow

September is also the month to sow salads and herbs for winter, and you won't regret it if you do. For me, there is no greater luxury than going out into the garden even on the dreariest of days and coming back with a basket full of the freshest leaves. Parsley – both flat and curly leaved – peppery leaves, such as mustard and mizuna, and a good winter lettuce are all on my list. Look out too for the special seasonal mixes of salad leaves that are becoming increasingly popular now. Sow now, while the weather and the soil are still warm. Any later, and although your seeds might germinate, the plants will struggle to put on much growth. In the main you will find these leaves are pretty resilient, but if the weather does turn very cold, be ready to cover them with some fleece. Or, follow the example of the gardeners at Chanticleer, a wonderful garden just outside Philadelphia in northeastern USA, and grow your salad in cold frames. Remove the lids on sunny days and pop them back on at night, adding a layer of hessian or bubble wrap for extra protection when needed.



Florence fennel has a wonderful, aniseed flavour and is so useful in the kitchen. The bulbs can be eaten raw, or steamed, grilled or boiled, and served with a cheese sauce or as an accompaniment to chicken or fish. It does have a tendency to bolt, however, so plant it too early and it will quickly run to seed at the expense of the juicy bulbs. I like to sow seed under glass in August ready for planting out in September. Do this while the seedlings are still small – 7.5-10cm tall – to avoid disturbing the taproot. Allow 30cm or so between the plants, firm the soil well around them and water well. It is important that the plants do not dry out, for despite its Mediterranean origins, fennel will not tolerate dry conditions. This is another reason why September is the perfect time for planting. If the weather warms up, and you are concerned that the fennel will bolt, just harvest the bulbs small and enjoy them in a salad or lightly braised in a little stock or white wine. Delicious.

By now the artichoke splits you planted in April should be in full swing. This is a tradition I inherited from Christopher Lloyd. The idea is that the unsplit plants will start producing in early summer, while the splits are still bulking up. Then, as the first crop reaches its end, the newer plants take over, extending the cropping season to the end of the summer. The secret to ensuring really succulent buds is water, and plenty of it. I must admit that the artichokes in my garden often get overlooked – they are such big, robust plants that it is easy to forget that they need care too. The other secret is to harvest while they are no bigger than your fist, cutting back to the next bud to keep the plant tidy. Regular picking will also keep blackfly at bay. Finally, earwigs love to bury themselves between the ‘petals’, so give the buds a good shake before you cook them. Christopher loved to eat them boiled with a good vinaigrette, as do I, but occasionally it is nice to combine them with other, more robust, flavours, such as fennel.

You can take your foot off the plant-maintenance pedal a little in September, but don't forget to check on plants growing close to the house – if they are sheltered, they may be missing out on any rainfall and will still need regular watering.

As well as keeping the vegetable garden looking smart by taking away the old leaves on a regular basis, you will be depriving slugs and snails of a winter hiding place.

You can find Aaron's recipe for fennel, aubergine and artichoke caponata at gardensillustrated.com/recipes

Weeding out cancer

Cancer Research UK-funded scientists are using artificial intelligence to help reduce the threat of lung cancer relapse

Every gardener is constantly on high alert for weeds that persist and overrun their gardens, endangering much-loved plants and delicate ecosystems. We do all we can to pre-empt this invasive growth, yet we can never be completely confident that a deep-rooted weed won't resurface.

The scientists at Cancer Research UK are no different in their hopes of eliminating invasive growths of non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). As part of the TRACERx study, Dr Yinyin Yuan is studying lung tumours as a natural ecosystem to see how cancer cells are influenced by their surroundings as they grow. She's using a fast, automated way of analysing tiny images from inside lung tumours that could reveal how tumours evolve and develop resistance to therapy. Her tool uses artificial intelligence to build an exact picture of each patient's tumour architecture, and the information gained will enable researchers to design tailored treatment plans that can help reduce the threat of a relapse.

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The TRACERx study is the biggest single investment Cancer Research UK has made in a lung cancer research programme, and the start of a strategic focus on the disease for Cancer Research UK. It is thanks to generous supporters, including those who give gifts in Wills, that Cancer Research UK can fund large-scale projects with huge potential. Cancer Research UK is beyond grateful for the legacy gifts that

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Together we will beat cancer



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Cancer Research UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1089464), Scotland (SC041666), the Isle of Man (1103) and Jersey (247)



GARDENING TALENT

LACHLAN RAE

Lachlan is senior gardener at Gresgarth Hall in Lancashire – the private garden of landscape designer Arabella Lennox-Boyd – where he is responsible for maintaining and developing the garden's vast collection of trees and shrubs

PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

First plant love An enormous horse chestnut tree in the driveway of my childhood home. My elder brother and I would use the nuts for playing conkers. When I was around seven or eight, we managed to get some of them to grow.

How did your horticultural career start? I left school when I was 17 with little employment prospects. I had two options to pursue; either the Bordeaux Circus College or a National Certificate in Horticulture at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) in Dumfries. Without regret, I often wonder how I might be living had I trained in circus performance.

Horticultural hero My ten-year-old daughter Georgie. Her ability to retain information is incredible. She often gives me facts I didn't know, so she's doing her own research already.

Favourite landscape and garden Benmore Botanic Garden near Dunoon in western Scotland is unique in both its exquisite collections of trees and shrubs and its naturalistic appeal. Every surface is clothed in moss and lichen. It would be impossible to recreate.

Most worthwhile tip for every gardener Learn about taxonomy – how plants are classified and grouped – it will enhance your understanding

Favourite weed Herb Robert, *Geranium robertianum*, as it's quite stylish and easily controlled.

Guiding principles Choose plants suited to the existing environmental conditions rather than struggling with those on the edge of their tolerance. This is a great way to eliminate waste in the garden.

The future of horticulture Environmental and sustainability issues are the key challenges facing modern gardeners. Horticulture has a lot to answer for in terms of the movement of plants, pesticide, energy and water usage, and the destruction of natural biospheres for aesthetic gain.

Social media fix I follow a few good Instagram accounts: head gardener @_andy_W for his quality work at Euridge Manor; plantsman @johnmgrimshaw for his eclectic taste in plants; and @conservatory_diaries for the happenings at Wiston House Gardens in West Sussex where I used to work.

What's the next big project you'll be tackling in the garden? At home in October I'll be preparing my small but treasured collection of tender perennials for winter. At work, I'm propagating a range of interesting *Rhododendron* species and cultivars.

Contact lachlanrae@hotmail.co.uk; @lachlanrae_horticulturist

Choosing plants suited to existing environmental conditions will eliminate a lot of waste in the garden

NATURAL RHYTHM

Set within a wild landscape of ancient woodland and flower-rich meadows, an evolving Somerset garden teems with life

WORDS AMBRA EDWARDS PHOTOGRAPHS CLAIRE TAKACS



A photograph of a stone house with a red-tiled roof and a garden filled with various plants and flowers. The house is made of light-colored stone and has a red-tiled roof with a chimney. The garden is lush with green plants, flowers, and a stone path. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

IN BRIEF

Name Cooks Farm.

What A garden awash with scent and sumptuous colour, dissolving magically into its surroundings.

Where Somerset.

Soil Heavy Burtle clay, in need of constant improvement, wet in places.

Size Two acres of garden set among 40 acres of conservation landscape.

Climate Relatively sheltered, but a frost pocket.

Hardiness zone USDA 9.

The area in front of the house was originally a dwarf box parterre enclosing softer planting. It has since evolved into an intensively planted area where Patricia enjoys the dynamic nature of gardening, relishing the changes of colour, mass and texture that occur through successive seasons.



It is nearly 20 years since Cooks Farm last featured in *Gardens Illustrated* (issue 83). “The garden has evolved somewhat since then,” laughs its creator, Patricia Stainton. “As have I...”

In those days, Patricia was at the forefront of a new style of perennial planting – loose, naturalistic and wildlife-friendly – that was then very novel in the UK (less so in Germany and the Netherlands), but has since become ubiquitous.

The rich, jewel-like colours she favoured – claret and crimson, deep purple and all-but-black – at a time when gardening fashion dictated ladylike pastels, have since been picked up by the likes of gardeners Sarah Raven and Monty Don, and are now widely admired. (Meanwhile Patricia has been saving the seed of her darkest and most sumptuous flowers every year, to produce poppies, astrantias, antirrhinums and sweet Williams in ever deeper and swoonier shades.)

Today, everyone understands the value of shrubby salvias to deliver long months of late-season colour. Back then, they were collector’s plants. Above all, the idea of selecting planting to sustain populations of bees, moths and butterflies, once seen as mildly eccentric, if laudable, has now become mainstream.

“And that’s really the most important development in the garden,” explains Patricia. “Over the years, I have become increasingly interested in ecology, and what interests me now is how the garden relates to the wider landscape – the woods and water, hedgerows and pasture, the bird life and the insect life.”

The garden is just part of a continuum, she explains, that extends over the 40 acres of Cooks Farm, taking in ponds and wetland, woodland and streams, flower-rich hay meadows and an orchard planted with heritage cider-apple trees and home to a stilt-legged hive specially designed to welcome wild bees. Wildlings such as red campion, viper’s bugloss and purple loosestrife are welcomed in all parts of the garden. Hares graze on the plantings by the farmyard wall, keeping the front of the border dense and bushy. Except for the deer-proofed vegetable garden ►

Above The path to the front door is the ideal place for intricate plantings of small and unusual subjects – where both the flowers themselves and the passage of the seasons can be observed in detail. Here Patricia grows delicately coloured verbenas, nerines and sweet Williams (*Dianthus barbatus*) along with deliciously fragrant *Salvia* Love and Wishes (= ‘Serendip6’), lavenders and rosemary.

Right above Along the rill are pots of *Eucomis* – deep-red *E. comosa* ‘Sparkling Burgundy’ and fresh-green *E. bicolor* – along with *Aeonium* ‘Zwartkop’, and several different types of agapanthus. The dark tones of the succulents are picked up by two towering specimens of *Phormium* ‘Dusky Princess’ at the far end of the rill.

Right below In these borders behind the house, Patricia’s romantic, blue-to-purple schemes give way to hotter, more intense colours, employing plenty of orange, purple and red. Here she uses sunflowers and heleniums (especially *H. ‘Moerheim Beauty’*), deep-red dahlias and purple gladioli, set off by elegant *Kniphofia* ‘Little Maid’ and different colours of box. *Cercis canadensis* ‘Forest Pansy’ provides a splash of reddish purple in the background.





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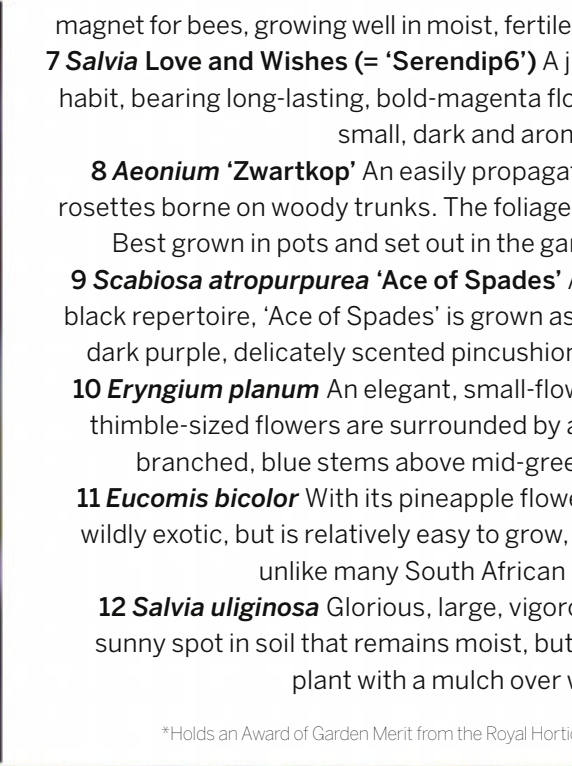
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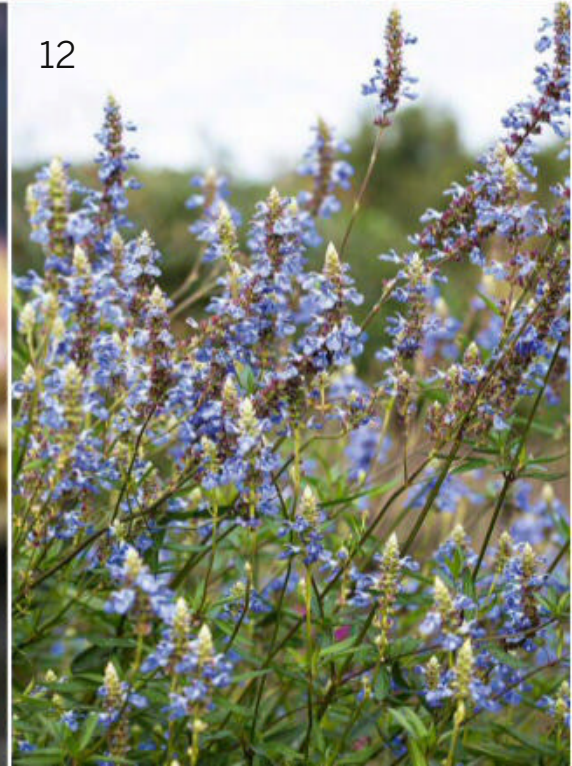
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12 KEY PLANTS

1 *Lythrum salicaria* Purple loosestrife is a wildflower of ponds and marshes, where its lofty spikes of magenta flowers sustain long-tongued insects such as brimstone butterflies, red-tailed bumblebees and elephant hawk moths. 1.5m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b†.

2 *Helianthus annuus* 'Earthwalker' To add height and vivacity to a hot border, Patricia calls on this dramatic sunflower, with abundant blooms in tawny and terracotta shades. 3m. RHS H4.

3 *Kniphofia* 'Little Maid' The daintiest of pokers with slender spikes of tubular flowers that open lemony-white from lime-green buds, and fade to a warm cream. 60cm. RHS H5.

4 *Astrantia major* hybrid Patricia loves astrantias for their easy-going nature and long flowering period, and has many in her garden. They hybridise freely, and this tall, dark and handsome black-stemmed example is probably a cross between *A. major* 'Venice' and *A. 'Moulin Rouge'*. 80cm. RHS H6.

5 *Succisa pratensis* The pincushion heads of the damp-loving devil's bit scabious are the primary food source of the declining marsh fritillary butterfly, which is classified as a priority species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. The leaves are long and oval, unlike those of field scabious, which are dark-green, hairy and deeply lobed. 60cm. RHS H7.

6 *Monarda* 'Prärienacht' Best known for its fragrant leaves, but valued by Patricia as a magnet for bees, growing well in moist, fertile soil in full sun or partial shade. 90cm. RHS H4.

7 *Salvia* Love and Wishes (= 'Serendip6') A justly popular, shrubby salvia with a small, neat habit, bearing long-lasting, bold-magenta flowers on contrasting dark calyces. Leaves are small, dark and aromatic. 80cm. RHS H3.

8 *Aeonium* 'Zwartkop' An easily propagated, evergreen succulent, with glossy, dark rosettes borne on woody trunks. The foliage grows darker, the hotter and sunnier its spot. Best grown in pots and set out in the garden in summer. 1-1.5m. AGM*. RHS H1C.

9 *Scabiosa atropurpurea* 'Ace of Spades' An essential component in Patricia's almost-black repertoire, 'Ace of Spades' is grown as an annual from seed each year. It bears very dark purple, delicately scented pincushion flowers up to 5cm across. 60cm. RHS H4.

10 *Eryngium planum* An elegant, small-flowered sea holly of upright bearing. Rounded, thimble-sized flowers are surrounded by a ruff of slender bracts, borne on long, very branched, blue stems above mid-green leaves. 90cm. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

11 *Eucomis bicolor* With its pineapple flowers and lush, tropical leaves, this plant looks wildly exotic, but is relatively easy to grow, being frost-hardy and welcoming moisture, unlike many South African bulbs. 50cm. AGM. RHS H4.

12 *Salvia uliginosa* Glorious, large, vigorous, sky-blue salvia that thrives in a warm, sunny spot in soil that remains moist, but not waterlogged. Protect the crown of the plant with a mulch over winter. 2m. AGM. RHS H4.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available



The way I like to plant things is slightly by chance; I don't mind not being completely in control

▷ (visiting deer regularly deliver an indiscriminate ‘Chelsea chop’), there is no division between cultivated plantings and nature’s garden: one blends gently into the other. Patricia is as pleased to see southern marsh orchids seeding in the meadows, or a six-spot burnet moth feeding on devil’s bit scabious, as to witness the first, fat, pineapple bloom on a selection of *Eucomis* (quite by accident, she swears, she seems to have become a collector), or to savour the complex colouring of a new dahlia. She delights in the tricks nature plays in the garden – the crossing of two sweet Williams (near-black *Dianthus barbatus* ‘Sooty’ and a rich, magenta-pink form), to produce a gorgeous new bi-colour; the self-seeders that settle in the path; the way Welsh poppies have leapt the wall to settle under a silvery *Eleagnus* ‘Quicksilver’.

Patricia is used to being a trend-setter. She and her husband Robin Levien are the founders of Studio Levien, a design consultancy that has led the way in the design of ceramics for over two decades. If these days we all favour simple, generous, white tableware, or sleek, space-saving bathroom fittings, our taste has almost certainly been formed by Studio Levien. A new product that gives her particular pleasure is a delicate, white bowl inspired by the pattern of a dragonfly’s wings: Patricia’s love of nature informs every aspect of her life.

“The key to good design,” says Patricia, “is to be appropriate, and to relate the garden to the buildings and landscape around it.” So she favours clean, straight lines close to the house, giving way to curving paths and more amorphous shapes as the garden drifts gently downhill into wildness. A modern oak and glass extension, built in 2008, prompted the creation of a wide, shallow rill. “What I like most is how the water reflects the sky on a bright day, and the movement of the clouds, so it is never a static thing.” Pots of her favourite *Eucomis* are arranged along each side, interspersed with agapanthus and glossy mahogany aeoniums. To one side stands a box parterre, enclosing a richly textured matrix of plants (veronicastrums, ▷

To continue turn to page 48

Above With its beds packed with cutting flowers, abundant fruit and vegetables, edgings of star-flowered garlic chives and tangles of nasturtium, Patricia’s enormous, productive garden is as beautiful as every other part of the garden. Here, safe from rabbits and deer, her gardener Selina grows hundreds of annuals each year to supplement the flower borders.

What interests me is how the garden
relates to the wider landscape – the
woods and water, the hedgerows and
pasture, the bird life and the insect life





In the beds that curve down to the River Brue, textural foliage plantings of ferns, *Darmera peltata* and *Rodgersia pinnata* 'Superba' contrast with tightly clipped balls of box. Most years, a sprinkling of hot colour is added to the green in the form of sunflowers, cosmos and nicotiana. A fallen tree trunk is retained to provide a useful insect habitat.



▷ thalictrums, sea hollies, dahlias, species gladioli) and cut through with narrow paths that allow her to immerse herself in the planting. To the other is a restful, green border, stocked with mounds of *Euphorbia* and different colours of *Pittosporum* and box. “I like mixing the greens together.” She also pays great attention to texture, enjoying subtle contrasts in foliage and relishing the interplay between firm box balls and swishing grasses and “a sanguisorba that is pure Barbara Cartland, with flowers just like pink feather boas.”

There was, originally, another formal garden edged with box in front of the house. “When the hedges fell prey to box blight and had to be removed, we decided not to rush into anything, but to experiment for a year or two – and eight years on we’re still experimenting. I’ve been on many botany trips – to Turkey, Romania, Greece, Italy, France, Switzerland and Sweden. I’ve learned so much about plants from seeing where they grow, and the communities of plants that grow together. So the way I like to plant things is slightly by chance: I don’t mind not being completely in control.”

In the lower and damper part of the garden, where a pair of broad borders wind down towards the River Brue, she emulates the effect of a meadow by planting in ribbons, supplementing an array of ferns and bold-leaved perennials such as rodgersias and *Rheum palmatum* with colourful annuals that she and her long-serving gardener, Selina Crumbie, grow by the hundreds in the vegetable garden. Wildflowers proliferate on the riverbank and around the margins of the four large ponds she has dug over the years. It is perfect pastoral. During lockdowns over the past year, she says, she has rarely ventured elsewhere, and has used less than a single tank of petrol. But with such beauty and serenity all about her, why would she want to go anywhere else? ■

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Patricia and Robin’s designer studio at studiolevien.com

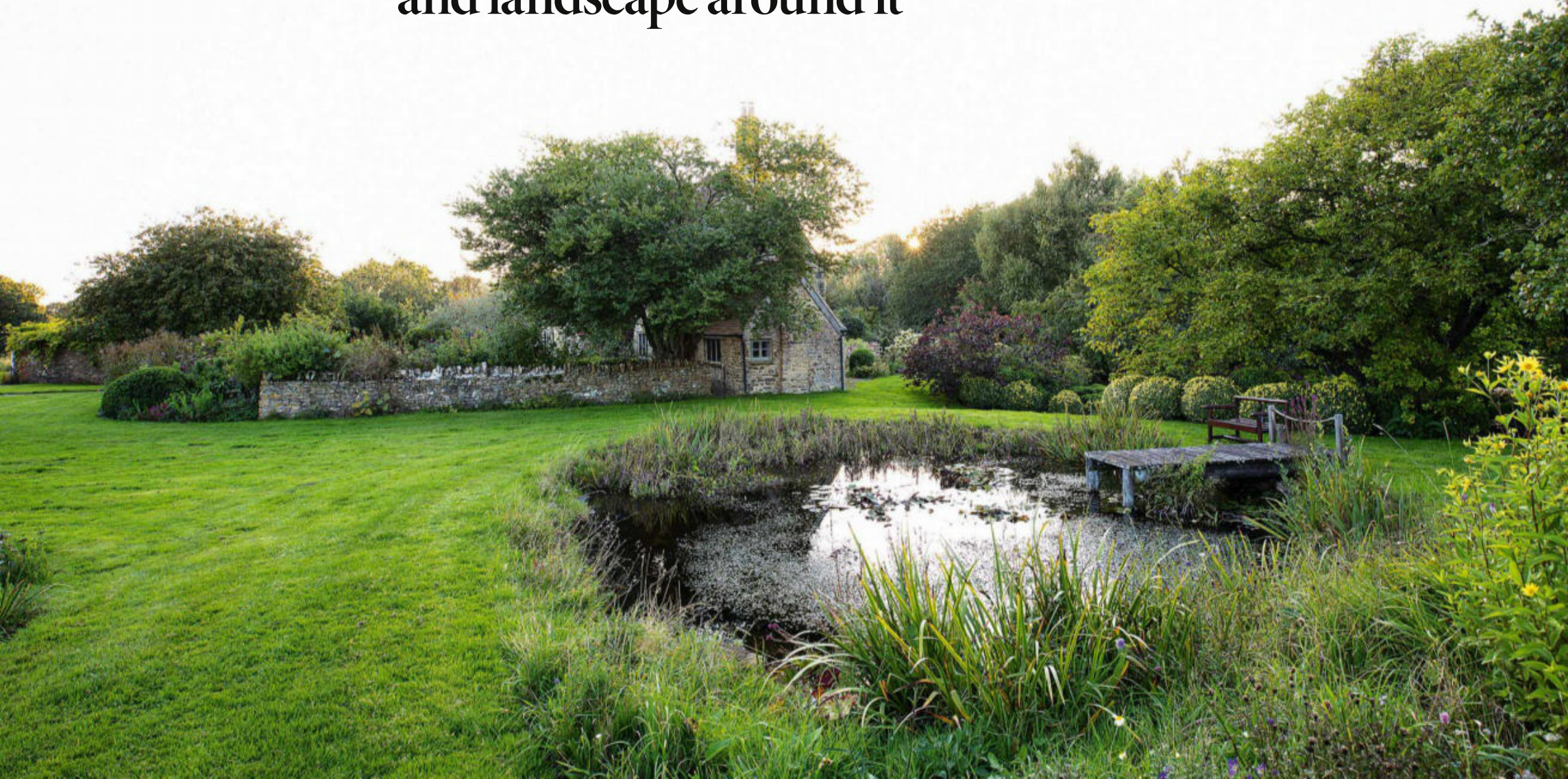
Above The extensive garden flows seamlessly into an orchard, where heritage apple trees thrive and wildflower-spangled grass bordering the mown paths is left to grow long.

Top right Arrangements of box balls placed beneath, and opposite, a spreading walnut tree provide a foil to the wilder areas beyond.

Top right The first of Patricia’s four ponds. She removed the topsoil around the pond margins, added just handful of wildflower plug plants, then allowed them to recolonise naturally, creating a habitat rich in wild plants and brimming with insect and amphibian life.



The key to good design is
to be appropriate, and to
relate the garden to the buildings
and landscape around it





Lobelia x speciosa
'Pink Elephant'

A fantastic grower from Ireland, with strong, evergreen rosettes, that retains much *L. siphilitica* vigour. Clear-pink flowers are held on tall stems. Established clumps spread up to 60cm. An improvement on the popular *L.* 'Compton Pink'. 1.2m. AGM*. RHS H5†.

LOBELIA

As loved by pollinators as they are by gardeners and designers, this group of plants offers a glorious range of colour and form to suit many garden styles

WORDS JONNY BRUCE PHOTOGRAPHS ANNAÏCK GUITTENY



dorning patios and pub frontages across Britain, the cascading blue of *Lobelia erinus* may be a much-loved symbol of summer but there is so much more to this diverse genus than merely colourful filler for hanging baskets. Found predominantly in warmer climes, the 400-plus species have a wide distribution, with one species, *L. urens*, found in parts of southern Britain. There are shrubby, annual and perennial species, with monocarpic giants such as the spectacular *L. deckenii* from Tanzania contrasting with the tiny, mat-forming *L. angulata* endemic to New Zealand. Their abundant flowering, colour range and tendency to hybridise has also resulted in many garden-worthy hybrids.

The name *Lobelia* may have been coined by Swedish scientist Carl Linneaus in 1753 for the Flemish botanist Matthias de l'Obel, but the plant has a longer history as a purgative in the sacred rituals and medicinal repertoire of indigenous people. Certainly, all parts of the plant are toxic and, due to poisonous compounds such as Lobeline, induce vomiting if ingested. This may be behind the name devil's tobacco, given to the Chilean *L. tupa*, or the association in Victorian England that lobelias, included in a floral arrangement, implied ill will. Thankfully this has done little to discourage breeders from creating new, highly ornamental cultivars.

Morphologically, lobelias tend to have simple leaves held alternately with flowering stems topped with two-lipped, tubular flowers divided into five lobes. Usually the upper lip is split in two while three lobes fan out to form the lower lip. Inevitably with such a broad genus the taxonomy has fluctuated with various other genera, including *Pratia* and *Isotoma*, now included under the umbrella of *Lobelia*.

By far the most familiar group of garden lobelias are the x *speciosa* hybrids. These are large-flowered crosses between *L. cardinalis* and *L. siphilitica*, both hardy North American species, and have justifiably become firm garden favourites. Barry Clarke, botanist at the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens in Hampshire, grows an impressive number of cultivated forms and explains that, because of *Lobelia*'s readiness to hybridise, these cultivars should only be vegetatively propagated. As a result, there is often confusion over some, particularly older, cultivars – *L. x speciosa* 'Vedrariensis' being a good example. Barry also holds the National Collection of species lobelias. His passion for the genus came from a wanderlust that took him around the world where he was able to see a wide range of species growing in the wild. With a few notable exceptions, many of these require specialist care and are described by Barry affectionately "as quite challenging".

A few species have adapted to more arid conditions but lobelias are generally associated with consistently moist ground. They prefer slightly acidic conditions but Barry grows most of his hardy varieties on chalk downland albeit on the site of a well-cultivated allotment. While *L. siphilitica* is a robust perennial that copes well with British winters, many hybrids – despite their reputations for enjoying damp soil – resent too much winter wet. The introduction of *L. cardinalis* as a parent, while injecting colour, is somewhat less robust and the evergreen rosettes often overwinter better if kept on the dry side. Two popular cultivars that benefit from this treatment are *L. x speciosa* 'Tania' and *L. 'Compton Pink'*.

While their large, colourful flowers easily justify their place in the border, modern hybrids tend to be short-lived. Most wild species such as *L. urens* and *L. spicata* may not compete in flower power but have an elegance that blends easily into a naturalistic planting scheme. It is also well worth seeking out some of the older cultivars. When I worked at De Hessenhof nursery in the Netherlands we grew *L. x speciosa* 'Ruby Slippers' on the same spot for 12 years and Barry has grown *L. cardinalis* 'Elmfeuer' for 15 years. Once established, their glossy rosettes are highly decorative but can be prone to molluscs and are worth a bit of spring protection. Your efforts will be repaid, however, when they begin flowering in mid-July – providing a useful bridge from mid- to late summer – usually requiring no staking, and injecting welcome colour often well into September. □

• Author Jonny Bruce is a gardener and writer. His recommendations for the best lobelias can be found over the next five pages.

PLANT PROFILE

What A diverse genus of more than 400 species of annuals, perennials and shrubs. The more cold-tolerant species have been greatly important to the development of ornamental cultivars. These x *speciosa* hybrids exhibit a vibrant range of colours from white, blue and deep purple through to vibrant red, and tend to send their flowering stems up 40cm to 1.2m above fleshy, evergreen rosettes.

Origins Most are concentrated in tropical or warm temperate regions but a few extend their range into cool temperate zones.

Season The most popular hybrids flower from mid-July until well into September.

Size There is a wide range in size from the tall and shrubby to diminutive, sprawling species with wiry stems.

Conditions The most popular cultivars tolerate sun or partial shade but require consistently moist soil in the summer. They are best kept slightly drier through the colder months, in a sheltered position or in a dry mulch to protect them from frost.

Hardiness Generally hardy, RHS H3-H5. The North American *Lobelia siphilitica* is one of the hardiest, coping with temperatures down to -10°C (RHS H4, USDA 8a-9b).

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

†Hardiness ratings given where available.

Lobelia x speciosa
'Hadspen Purple'

Named by Nori Pope after the Hadspen estate, where he and his wife Sandra based their famous nursery, this hybrid has gained deserved popularity since it was released in 2002. Velvety-purple flowers held atop strong stems. An easy grower. 60cm-1m. RHS H5.

Lobelia tupa

With its claw-like, orange/red flowers held on tall, upright stems that have narrow, hairy, grey-green leaves this is one of the most iconic lobelias. Known as devil's tobacco, this Chilean native appreciates a sunnier, drier site than most. 2m. RHS H4.



Lobelia laxiflora* subsp. *angustifolia

This shrubby lobelia thrives in sunny/drier situations adapted to southern US states and Mexico where it is found at fairly high altitude. A narrow-leaf form, more cold-tolerant than *L. laxiflora*. 1m. RHS H3.



***Lobelia x speciosa* 'Ruby Slippers'**

An early backcross from 1989 by Thurman Maness of Wildwood Nursery in North Carolina, USA. It may not have the largest of blooms, but it is one of the best red-flowered lobelias. Very long lived. 80cm.



***Lobelia x speciosa* 'Red Demon'**

A new, red cultivar with very large flowers that is not yet widely available. Barry Clarke admits it is not the most vigorous but deems it an improvement on the ever popular *L. cardinalis* 'Queen Victoria'. 1m.



***Lobelia cardinalis* 'Elmfeuer'**

A dramatic, dark-leaved and red-flowered cultivar, often noted by nurseries as synonymous with *L. cardinalis* 'Queen Victoria', although breeder Barry Clarke suggests it is a definite hybrid. 60-80cm.



Lobelia urens

Rare, British native, mainly found in Devon among grass on poor, acid heathland. Sometimes called 'flower of the Axe', it thrives on intermittently disturbed ground. Pretty, small, blue-purple flowers. 40cm. RHS H4.



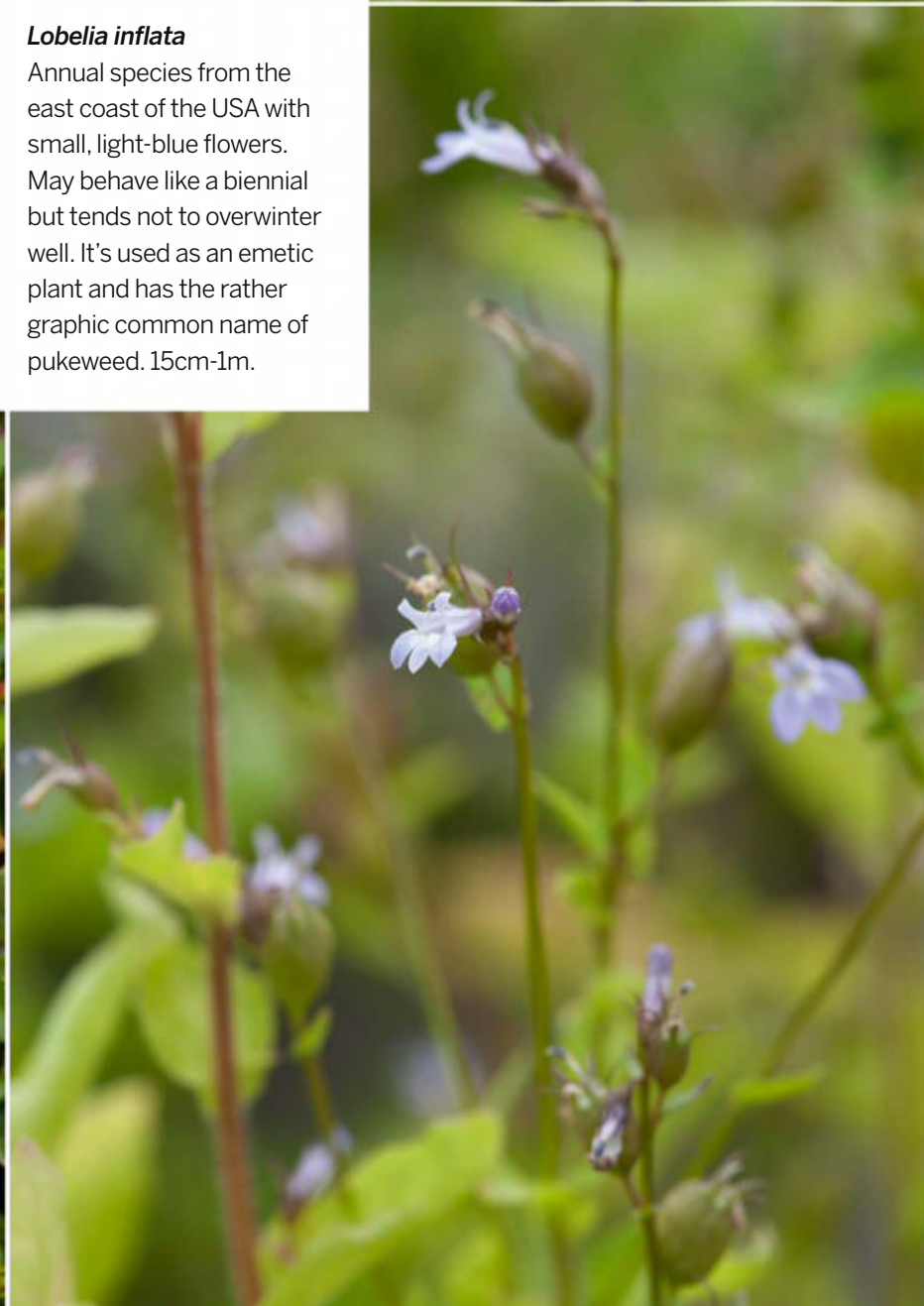
Lobelia spicata

A highly variable perennial from North America with elegant spires of icy, lavender-blue flowers that can appear as early as late May and persist until the beginning of August. It tolerates dry soils better than most. 60cm. RHS H4.



Lobelia angulata

This diminutive, creeping species grows in woodland and alongside streams in its native New Zealand. Small, white flowers from June to September. Good for a container on the north side of the house. 10cm. RHS H4, USDA 6a-9b.



Lobelia inflata

Annual species from the east coast of the USA with small, light-blue flowers. May behave like a biennial but tends not to overwinter well. It's used as an emetic plant and has the rather graphic common name of pukeweed. 15cm-1m.



***Lobelia siphilitica*
f. *albiflora* 'Alba'**

White form of *L. siphilitica* with less vigour but still producing tall flower spikes above bright-green foliage. Can be planted as a marginal pond plant with its roots fully submerged. 1.2m. RHS H4.

***Lobelia x speciosa*
'White Witch'**

An exciting new cultivar, but with limited availability. The large, white flowers have a dash of pink in the throat. Barry admires its showy flowers, but admits it is a weak grower. 60-80cm. RHS H4.



Cultivation

Most hardy lobelias are best grown in rich, moist, slightly acid soils in partial shade. They will tolerate full sun in cooler climates as long as the soil does not become too dry. Almost any ground being prepared to receive lobelias will benefit from the incorporation of organic matter, leaf mould or regular garden compost. This will help improve the structure of soil, preventing waterlogging in the winter but increasing water retention in the summer. Many species are easy enough from seed sown in late winter and should make flowering plants in their first year but the seedlings will be variable. The rosettes of named hybrids should be divided in early spring. If winter temperatures regularly fall below freezing during winter, a dry covering of leaves will help reduce the risk of rotting. After the worst of the frosts have passed, these leaves should be cleared away. After some decent rain in late spring it is beneficial to mulch plants to help retain moisture into summer. It is suggested that watering the rosettes as the season transitions into autumn improves their hardiness.

Planting combinations

Lobelia siphilitica, *L. cardinalis* and their hybrids (*L. x speciosa*) are all well adapted to the wooded edges of streams. While there are a number of cultivars that show remarkable longevity, many of the newer introductions, impressive in the size and colour of their flowers, seem to fade away after a few years. These larger flowers make a bold statement in a border, while the more demure and variable flowers of species such as *L. spicata* and *L. siphilitica* appear more comfortable in a naturalistic planting scheme. The same can be said of the older, smaller-flowered cultivars. One of the most useful lobelias is *L. cardinalis*, which grows wild along woodland streams of North America and provides an intensity of red rarely found in the shade garden. Some of the smaller, creeping forms are useful woven through the moist leaf litter of a woodland garden. Plants such as *L. angulata* will work themselves among the leaves of larger plants, sending up masses of white, star-like flowers. Barry has had success plugging these creeping forms into meadow grass. Other species also grow well in grass, such as the rare, native *L. urens*.

Where to see and buy

- **Barry Clarke**
St Athens, Chapel Close, Houghton, Hampshire SO20 6LS.
Tel 07919 893060, Email: brambleboy70@btinternet.com
Instagram: barryclarke45
Barry opens his garden by appointment only, and offers a mail-order seed list, available on request.
 - **Burncoose Nursery**
Gwennap, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 6BJ.
Tel 01209 860316, burncoose.co.uk
 - **Beth Chatto's Nursery**
Elmstead Market, Colchester, Essex CO7 7DB.
Tel 01206 822007, bethchatto.co.uk
 - **Cotswold Garden Flowers**
Sands Lane, Badsey, Evesham, Worcestershire WR11 7EZ.
Tel 01386 422829, cotswoldgardenflowers.co.uk
 - **Farmyard Nurseries**
Dol Llan Road, Llandysul, Carmarthenshire SA44 4RL.
Tel 01559 363389, farmyardnurseries.co.uk
 - **Marchants Hardy Plants**
2 Marchants Cottages, Mill Lane, Laughton, East Sussex BN8 6AJ. Tel 01323 811737, marchantshardyplants.co.uk
 - **Special Plants**
Greenways Lane, Cold Ashton, Wiltshire SN14 8LA.
Tel 01225 891686, specialplants.net
- *National Collection holder.

IN BRIEF

Name Horniman Museum.

What A display garden showcasing varied grassland species of North American and South African flora, forming contemporary, naturalistic and sustainable planting.

Where London.

Soil Long-term cultivated and enriched loam.

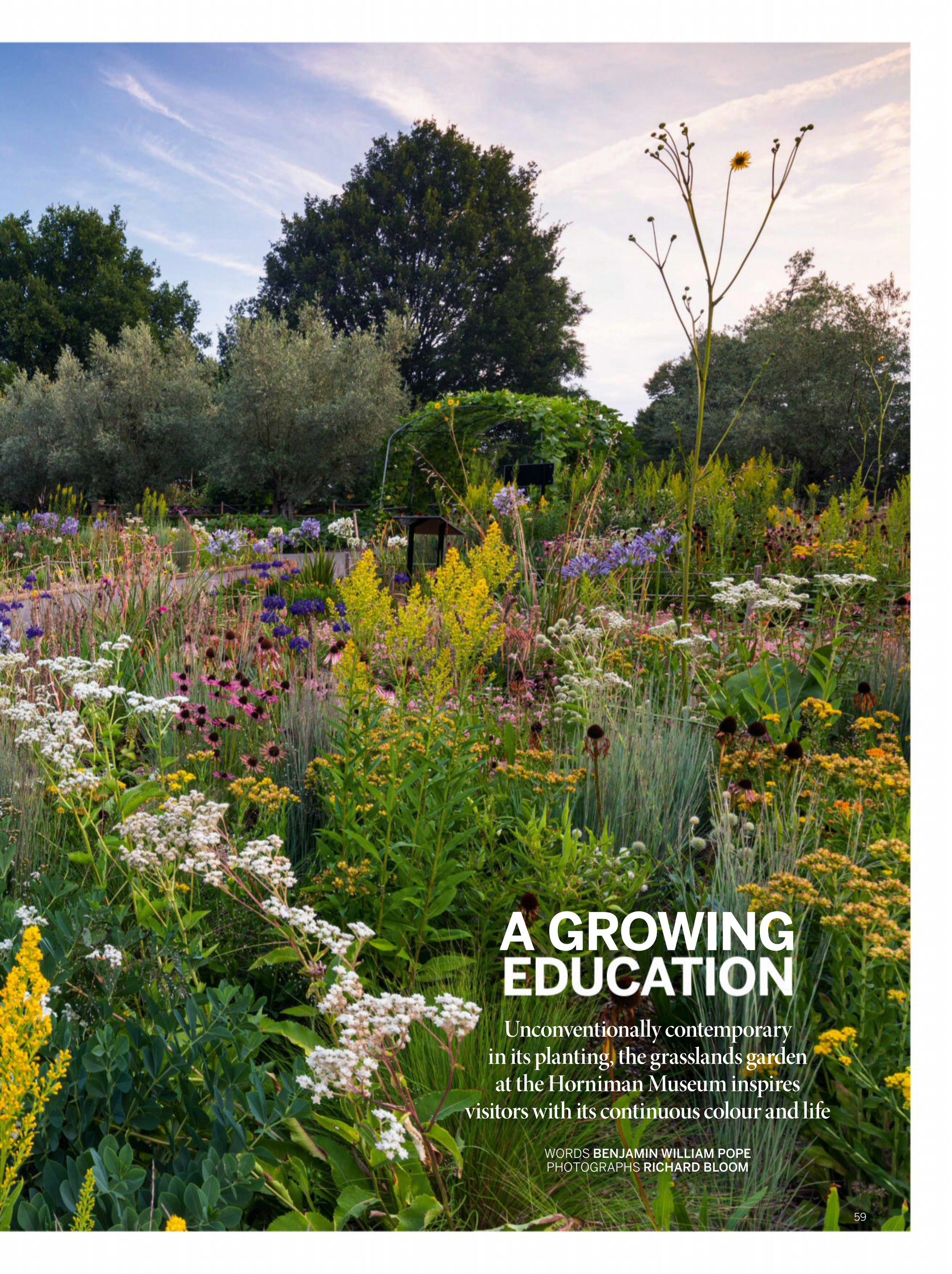
Size 400 square metres.

Climate Warm temperate.

Hardiness zone USDA 9b.

By late summer the riot of colour across the grasslands plantings has reached a crescendo. Showy agapanthus and echinacea compete with the intense-yellow spires of *Solidago speciosa* and the carefree umbels of *Parthenium integrifolium*.





A GROWING EDUCATION

Unconventionally contemporary in its planting, the grasslands garden at the Horniman Museum inspires visitors with its continuous colour and life

WORDS BENJAMIN WILLIAM POPE
PHOTOGRAPHS RICHARD BLOOM



“The visual changes in the planting keep the garden interesting and allow people to discover something new each time they visit,” says head gardener Errol Fernandes

On a gentle slope in the heart of southeast London, sits a naturalistic display of South African and North American flora, popping with vibrant colour and gently swaying in the soft, warm breeze

of late summer. It's a visual feast and one that feels botanically very different from the surrounding 16 acres of manicured borders and green space, which together make up the gardens of the Horniman Museum. Since opening in 1901, the museum has sought to display, educate and preserve mankind's cultural response and effect on the natural world, housing everything from textiles to musical instruments, living butterflies and taxidermy. In 2015, when plans for the new World Gallery were taking shape, an opportunity arose to redevelop an aged food garden. The idea was to create a display linking living plants to the new anthropology and natural history exhibitions. Wisely, the museum appointed Sheffield-based professor of horticultural ecology, James Hitchmough, an expert in naturalistic, seed-sown planting schemes and at the forefront of sustainable urban greening.

Given the role of redesigning the space, James explains: “The aim was to create a garden displaying the unique grassland flora of three different regions that have historically been inhabited and utilised by indigenous people, and are now critically endangered.” These include the prairie in North America, along with the Renosterveld steppe and eastern montane grassland in South Africa. While highlighting this plight, the garden also has to work practically, with a long season of interest to entertain visitors and a sustainable focus on its future management and maintenance. Beginning in early spring with *Dodecatheon* and *Pulsatilla*, the flowering continues with *Baptisia*, *Berkheya*, species gladioli and much more. Appearing in colourful waves one after the other, the flowering reaches a

peak in late summer with grasses, daisies, succulents and perennials jostling for attention. Head gardener Errol Fernandes confirms that the dynamic nature of the planting is key to its success. “Even as the flowers begin to fade late in the year, the garden takes on yet another look,” he says. Loose structure in the form of grasses provides context for the sepia-toned seedheads that persist through winter, before everything is cut back in spring ready to grow afresh.

Acquiring the plants was not so straightforward. Many species were not commercially available and much of the plant material was grown from seed in the museum's own nursery, before being planted out for the opening of the garden in 2018. The plants have established well, although the blue stem grass (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) has struggled in places.

A crucial factor in the performance of the garden is the gravel mulch. At 150mm deep, it surrounds the root balls of the plants with only the bottom section of roots touching the soil below. While ensuring the roots remain moist, the gravel creates a dry, free-draining dry substrate, making it difficult for even the most persistent seedlings to take root. The result is a light and open habit to the planting, suiting the selected species and requiring very little weeding and no watering once established. For Errol and his team, this is not only a blessing in terms of saving resources and maintenance time, but also “a lesson for all in sustainable gardening”.

As the grass garden enjoys its fourth summer, visitors flock to witness the ever-changing spectacle. Bees, butterflies and other invertebrates also visit, taking advantage of the nectar and pollen on offer. The sun keeps shining, the plants keep flowering and the museum continues to enthrall and educate visitors about our close connection with nature. ■

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Horniman Museum & Gardens, 100 London Road, London SE23 3PQ.

Tel 020 8699 1872. **Web** horniman.ac.uk

Turn the page for 16 key grassland plants ►



Rivers of dusky pink *Diascia* intersect tussocks of *Schizachyrium scoparium* as *Silphium terebinthinaceum* rise above the fading embers of *Echinacea*. The ebb and flow of flowers, foliage and seedheads through the seasons delights both visitors to the garden and onlookers from the surrounding residential community.



16 KEY PLANTS

1 *Galtonia candicans* Upright, flowering stems of nodding, ivory bells crown the strappy, green leaves of this bulbous perennial during late summer. 1m. AGM*. RHS H4, USDA 6a-10b†.

2 *Asclepias tuberosa* A tuberous perennial known for its flat-topped clusters of vivid-orange flowers loved by butterflies and bees. Its roots were traditionally chewed by Native Americans as a cure for pleurisy. 1m. RHS H4, USDA 3a-9b.

3 *Solidago rigida* var. *humilis* 'Golden Rockets' Stiff flowering stems erupt from perennial, broad, basal leaves in late summer, holding soft clusters of small, rich-yellow flowers that are adored by pollinators. 60cm.

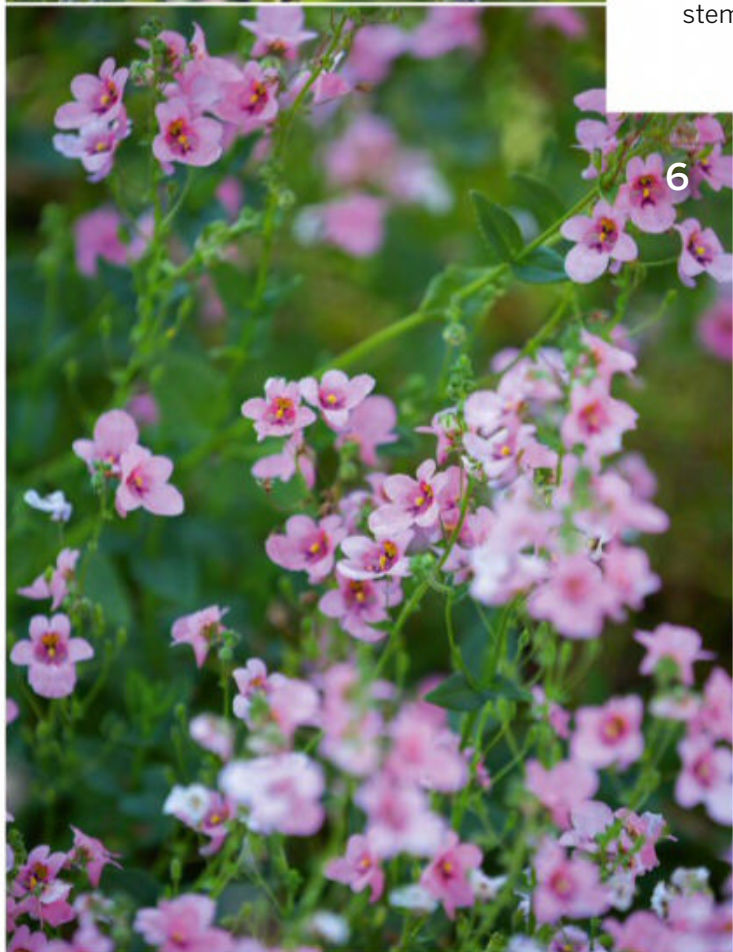
4 *Baptisia australis* A bushy perennial from the pea family with fresh, trilobed leaves and numerous vivid-blue, pea-like flowers during summer, followed by interesting, conspicuous seedpods that remain through winter. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.

5 *Silphium terebinthinaceum* Known as prairie burdock, this robust perennial has large, hirsute, spade-like leaves. Bright-yellow, daisy-like flowers appear in loose clusters aloft strong, tall stems from midsummer through to autumn. 3m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-8b.

6 *Diascia vigilis* Loose spires of delicate, soft-pink flowers appear through summer and autumn, complementing the small, pale-green leaves of this semi-evergreen, sprawling perennial. 40cm. AGM. RHS H3.

7 *Aloe* (no specific species) A large genus with many species native to South Africa, having thick succulent, pointed leaves that form a permanent, basal rosette. During late summer, individual spikes of tubular, orange flowers appear on mature plants.

8 *Solidago speciosa* A rhizomatous, unbranched perennial, often with dark stems, small leaves and an upright habit, holding a terminal spire of tiny, yellow flowers throughout late summer. 90cm. USDA 3a-8b.





9



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13

9 *Parthenium integrifolium* A tuberous perennial with sturdy, upright stems holding clusters of white flowers during summer and early autumn, turning dark brown and ornamentally standing through winter. Used as a medicine by Native Americans. 1.2m. USDA 4a-8b.

10 *Echinacea tenesseeensis* 'Rocky Top' Pink, upwardly curved petals adorn bold, central cones throughout late summer, held on the thin, upright stems of this clump-forming perennial. 70cm. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

11 *Schizachyrium scoparium* A deciduous, perennial grass that forms a tufted mound of bluish-green foliage, followed by reddish-brown flowers in late summer before taking on fantastic autumnal shades. 90cm. RHS H6, USDA 3a-9b.

12 *Agapanthus* 'Bressingham Blue' A clump-forming perennial with deciduous, strap-like, arching leaves and relaxed spherical umbels of vibrant-blue tubular flowers from midsummer to early autumn. 80cm. RHS H4, USDA 8a-11.

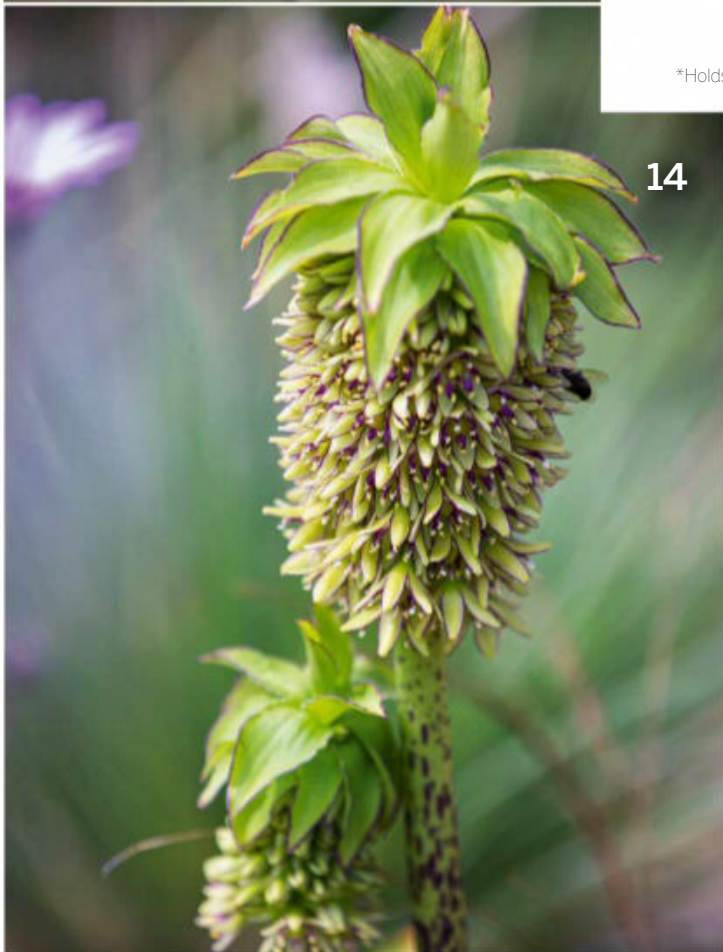
13 *Kniphofia uvaria* Dramatic perennial with chunky spikes of rich-orange flowers during summer. These open from red buds before fading to yellow, creating the distinctive, 'hot poker' appearance above strappy leaves. 1.4m. USDA 5a-9b.

14 *Eucomis bicolor* A bulbous perennial with decorative, burgundy markings on the edges of the flowers and spots on the leaves and stem, flowering from midsummer to early autumn. 50cm. AGM. RHS H4.

15 *Agapanthus praecox* A semi-evergreen perennial with globes of blue, trumpet-shaped flowers that appear from midsummer to early autumn, held on strong, upright stems above thick, strappy, green foliage. 1m. USDA 8a-10b.

16 *Eryngium yuccifolium* An evergreen perennial that has spiny edged, sword-like blue-grey leaves that form a basal cluster. Spherical creamy white flowerheads appear late summer on upright branched stems. 1m. RHS H4, USDA 3a-8b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.



14



15



16



From left to right The park is a precious space for residents and visitors to meet and relax; A deep-red strain of *Dahlia* 'Sunset Mixed' fits into the park's rich and intense colour scheme; The hand-painted hashtag provides a reference for visitors, who can make digital connections using their own pictures of the garden.

Pocket paradise

Revitalising a residential street, guerilla gardener Richard Reynolds has made his mark on a pocket park in Devon

WORDS LIA LEENDERTZ PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

A pocket park, according to Richard Reynolds, who tends one in picturesque Castle Street in Totnes, Devon, is a park that “doesn’t have room for a bandstand, but you might just squeeze in a string quartet”. In his opinion it must also have room for a couple of benches and perhaps some play equipment, as well as having a sense of enclosure. “You see greened-up, former parking spaces called ‘pocket parks’ but imagine sitting in one. I think that’s a nonsense.” His park, as tiny as it is, really feels like a park.

Moving from Elephant and Castle in central London with their two daughters, Richard and his wife Lyla made the decision to actively look for a public space to take on and green up. Richard had been at the forefront of the guerrilla gardening movement in London and had created Elliott’s Row pocket park in Southwark, but it was clear to him that such spaces are just as necessary in a small market town as they are in a big city. “It is wrong to assume that everyone beyond central London has a garden. Here we have a two-and-a-bit bedroom house with no garden and barely any pavement space, and at least ten of our neighbours are in a similar situation.”

They arrived hoping to adopt a garden, and Castle Street pocket park turned out to be perfect opportunity. It is a very decent 18m x 9m and runs along the stone wall boundary to Totnes Castle grounds, bounded on its other sides by railings and with lots of growth, a lawn and borders, and a couple of benches. The street was once featured on postcards of Totnes, and the little park had been built in the 1970s by a local business, and until recently been tended to by another resident. As luck would have it the former gardener was moving out just as Richard and his family moved in. “It was the perfect guerrilla





IN BRIEF

What A guerrilla-gardened 'pocket park'.

Where Totnes, South Devon.

Size 18m x 9m.

Soil Acidic and extremely free-draining with significant rubble.

Climate Warm temperate, with high rainfall and some frosts. North-facing park with some sun in the mornings.

Hardiness zone USDA 9.

Pocket parks are just as necessary in a small market town as they are in a big city

The pocket park has enough space for two benches, a lawn and several perennial borders, all carefully tended by Richard every week. His aim is to garden it intensively, with plenty of changing interest all year round to draw residents in to use it. In late summer there is a backdrop of the spectacular, if briefly, blossoming of *Eucryphia lucida*.



From left to right *Dahlia* 'Topmix Red', with *Rudbeckia laciniata*, continuing the garden's fiery colour scheme; *Cosmos* are dotted through the garden to provide late-summer colour; A transplanted fuchsia, donated by one of the street's residents. Many of the plants are gifts from neighbours who love to use the garden.

Borders are planted in a style inspired by Great Dixter, with hot and bright oranges, reds and chrome yellows to brighten the north-facing spot

▷ gardening opportunity, a space that had been vacated by someone else. We waited for a summer to see if anyone else was tending it and then moved in on it." The street had become a little run-down and he was inspired by the idea of turning it into a place that might appear on a postcard once again. "I liked the idea of beautifying this street, and putting it back on the map." With borders now colourfully packed with carefully tended flowering perennials, he has certainly done that.

As they are what is known among locals as 'DFLs' or 'Down From Londons', Richard and Lyla have benefited in particular from their involvement in the project, in the sense that it has given them a role in the community. Many people stop and chat – "You find that interested people are generally interesting themselves," says Richard – and local residents have been supportive, some donating plants and containers, and many making use of the space. But this is not a community gardening project. Richard has done all of the work himself, which gives him the creative control that he obviously relishes. He has planted the borders in a style inspired by Great Dixter, with hot and bright oranges, reds and chrome yellows to brighten the north-facing spot: dahlias, rudbeckias, salvias and cosmos dominate in late summer, as well as a few late flowers of the many roses he has planted. He spends several hours a week working on the park and manages it with great care, even "unfashionably", he says, mowing the lawn twice a week in summer and weeding and top dressing it to make a beautiful sward for local children to play on. "I could ask for help, but it is so tiny and I love doing it so much that it is not a burden," he says. "I don't ever want council workers of other guerrilla gardeners thinking the park looks a bit neglected and so moving in on it, which is always a danger with public spaces. That's why I work so hard to keep it looking good." ■

USEFUL INFORMATION

The park is part of the #LoveCastleSt project revitalising the street through beautification, nature and community connections. Follow updates on Twitter @Richard_001





Pretty Castle Street, with its densely packed historic homes nestled in the shadow of the Norman castle, once appeared on postcards of Totnes but had become more run down over the years. Richard's hope is that the garden helps residents and tourists to appreciate the beauty of the area.

ALISTAIR GRIFFITHS

The RHS director of science and collections on how a childhood love of plants sowed the seeds of a career and how 30 million gardeners can help reverse the climate crisis

WORDS CLAIRE MASSET PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Professor Alistair Griffiths wants to transform the way we garden. As director of science and collections at the RHS, his mission is to make gardening better for people, for nature and for the planet. It's an ambitious aim, but Alistair is the right man for the job.

His quest springs from a lifelong love of gardening and the conviction that science can improve the world. "My grandad inspired me. When I was four, he bought me two little sedums in a car boot sale. My dad then gave me a piece of front garden. Soon the sedums had overgrown the whole thing." Like his stonecrops, Alistair's infatuation with plants hasn't stopped growing. When he's not working, he gardens. "I have to be surrounded by plants," he smiles.

As a young Lancashire lad, Alistair wanted to be a forester. "But I found out what it was about and decided against it. I didn't want to cut down trees, I wanted to grow them." He left school at 16 and built up his plant knowledge with a diploma in horticulture at nearby Myerscough College and a part-time job in a garden centre. This mix of the academic and the practical has been a leitmotif in his career.

A spell at Ness Botanic Gardens near Liverpool introduced him to botanist Dr Hugh McAllister. "Hugh was an inspiration. I wanted to be like him. He encouraged me to go to university." And so, in 1998, Alistair graduated from Reading University with a degree in botany and plant biology. "I did my third-year research project in the High Atlas Mountains, studying the conservation status of *Cupressus dupreziana* var. *atlantica*." Explaining his academic success, Alistair says with unaffected modesty: "I'm not the sharpest tool in the box, but I have a lot of passion."

After his degree, he worked for a short while in a high-street opticians but was unhappy. "I remember my gran sending me a picture of the Eden Project and suggesting I apply to work there. I didn't think I could do it, but I got an interview and they took me on." He started by propagating plants, then moved into the plant records department before becoming head of science. He did a PhD while working at Eden. "Looking back, it's not something I'd recommend."

While Alistair was at the Eden Project, from 1999 to 2013, the role of director of science at the RHS came up a couple of times. "I wasn't ready when it first came round." The second time he was. Since June 2013, he has headed a team of 70 scientists and nearly as many PhD and post-doctoral students. Their aim is to maximise the environmental and health benefits of plants. "What's exciting is that at

RHS Garden Wisley we can turn science into applied action," he explains. "Some students are looking into climate-resilient trees, measuring things such as carbon sequestration, pollution capture and cooling effects. Others are studying the noise-reduction properties of various plants, to tackle noise pollution in cities. We're also looking at how plant scent, colour and shape can boost our wellbeing."

Alistair wants to design a blueprint for a wellbeing garden (he's even working on a version in his own garden). "We can create habitats that help with human stresses. For years, we've underplayed the benefits of ornamental plants. All we have ever used them for is beauty." As his book – *Your Wellbeing Garden* – explains, gardens and green spaces are so much more than places of beauty. They can heal,

calm or excite; increase our physical health; bring us closer to other people; protect us from extremes of temperature, noise and pollution; and create habitats for wildlife. Alistair's team is helping to increase these positives, known as 'ecosystem benefits'.

Alistair believes we're entering "a new, golden era" of horticulture. Hilltop, the recently opened Home of Gardening Science at RHS Garden Wisley, is physical proof of this. A place for behind-the-scenes, cutting-edge research, it also features an open-to-all permanent exhibition showcasing the benefits of plants and gardening. Visitors also have access to a 28,000-book library, learning studios and a teaching garden. They can even take

part in experiments. "We've got the UK's biggest garden plant herbarium at Hilltop. We're hoping to expand it to include all 400,000 in the UK and create a database of their uses from an environmental, and health and wellbeing perspective." All this information will eventually be available via the online RHS Plant Finder facility.

Climate change is the most pressing issue for Alistair. "There's a lot we need to do. We need to inspire people to use gardening as a vehicle to help reverse the climate and biodiversity crisis we're facing," he says. "That's what's critical: how we steward the planet. The Earth will carry on, it's we who are at risk. But we can turn it around." His task may be considerable, but his message is simple: "Garden with your footprint in mind. Thirty million UK gardeners can make a huge difference." ■

USEFUL INFORMATION

RHS Hilltop, the Home of Gardening Science, is based at RHS Garden Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QB. To plan and book your visit, go to rhs.org.uk/gardens/wisley

FOR YEARS, WE'VE
UNDERPLAYED
THE BENEFITS OF
ORNAMENTAL
PLANTS; ALL WE
HAVE USED THEM
FOR IS BEAUTY



DULCET TONES

Horticulturist Alison Jenkins captures the wistfulness of the departing summer with subtle displays of mellow yellows, dusky pinks and coppery foliage that hail the coming of autumn

WORDS ALISON JENKINS PHOTOGRAPHS EVA NEMETH





AUTUMNAL ACCENTS

I've had a number of these old apple crates for years. They have been used as bookshelves and bedside tables as I've moved from house to house. Now they have woodworm so I am trying to find different uses for them outside until they finally disintegrate. As the summer comes to an end, I find myself turning to those warm, autumnal hues of yellow and orange, anticipating cosy fireside evenings again.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition

The crate needed lining with black landscape fabric, which I secured with a staple gun, to stop the compost falling through the gaps. Ideally it should be lifted off the ground with tiles to allow air circulation and stop the wooden base rotting too quickly. The *Crocasmia* gave instant height while the *Melica* echoed its grassy form and added volume, giving the composition a loose, meadowy feel. The pale-orange tones of the *Coreopsis*, *Asclepias* and *Crocasmia* are all similar and create a rhythmic repetition running through the dense, green foliage. The darker foliage and redder flowers of the *Cuphea* are a little off balance and make the composition feel a more informal.

Cultivation and care

A brightly lit position is best for these sun lovers. The *Coreopsis* and *Cuphea* are on the tender side so could be lifted and brought under cover to protect them from the worst of the winter weather. You could also take cuttings from the *Cuphea* in autumn. The *Melica* flowers in early summer, but if you cut it back, which is advisable as it is a prolific self-seeder, it will send up fresh foliage and a few, sparser, flowers in late summer. Once all the foliage in the planter has died down, you can cut it back. The following spring you could add some earlier flowering plants such as the hardy annual *Orlaya grandiflora*, which will be over by the time the *Crocasmia* is in flower.

Plants

1 *Crocasmia x crocosmiiflora*

'Golden Glory' Robust perennial with handsome, strappy foliage. 80cm. RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b†.

2 *Coreopsis* Mango Punch (= 'Rp5')

Short-lived perennial with delicate foliage and masses of flowers all summer. 50cm. RHS H3.

3 *Cuphea subuligera* Long-flowering, tender perennial, also sold as *Cuphea caeciliae*. 45cm. RHS H3.

4 *Melica ciliata* Perennial grass with early, dark flowers turning to buff later in the season. 60cm. RHS H6.

5 *Asclepias tuberosa* Butterfly weed from California with showy, waxy, orange flowers. 90cm. RHS H4, USDA 3a-9b.



PEACH MEDLEY

Grasses come into their own in late summer and add lightness and volume to a planter. I love the graceful flowers of the *Stipa* and was keen to find a way to combine it with some annuals I'd sown earlier in the year, the *Alonsoa* and *Panicum*, which both had a light frothiness about them. Salvias are particularly good for planters as they flower well into November. You could substitute the dark-red *Salvia* 'Cherry Pie' for 'Salmon Dance' for a different depth of colour.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition

The round, galvanised container sits outside our kitchen window so it has to work hard, often with tulips and wallflowers in the spring, which are quickly followed by summery combinations. The compost becomes depleted so I tend to replace the top half with a mix of topsoil and compost each year and refresh the whole container every two or three years. I was drawn to the dusky, peach tones of the *Agastache* and thought the upright, vertical spikes would be a good counterpoint to the rounded, arching forms of the *Alonsoa*, *Panicum* and *Salvia*, which flop over the side of the planter. I could have omitted the *Oenothera*, but it's such a generous flowerer that I often rely on it for a long-lasting display.

Cultivation and care

This planter needs to be in a sunny spot and the plants are packed quite tightly together so it needs regular watering. I would dismantle it all in November when I'm ready to plant out a spring display, which means potting up the *Stipa* and *Agastache* to overwinter outside and keeping the *Salvia* and *Oenothera* somewhere under cover, in a cold greenhouse for example. I'd also take cuttings of the salvias in September. The *Panicum* comes easily from seed so I would save some of this to sow in the early spring. It can become expensive if you have to buy everything for summer planters, so it feels good to be able to grow some on yourself.

Plants

- 1 *Alonsoa warscewiczii* 'Peachy-keen'** Dark stems with peachy-pink flowers. 50cm. RHS H3.
- 2 *Salvia* 'Wendy's Wish'** Upright perennial with magenta flowers into autumn. 1m. RHS H3, USDA 9a-11.
- 3 *Oenothera lindheimeri* 'Whirling Butterflies'** Airy, short-lived perennial. 80cm. RHS H4, USDA 5a-9b.
- 4 *Stipa calamagrostis*** Perennial grass. 80cm. AGM*. RHS H4.
- 5 *Agastache* 'Kolibri'** Dusky-peach flower spikes. 80cm. RHS H4.
- 6 *Panicum capillare* 'Frosted Explosion'** Huge sprays of tiny flowers. 40cm. RHS H3.
- 7 *Salvia x jamensis* 'Salmon Dance'** Flowers into autumn. 60cm. RHS H4.







INDUSTRIAL DECAY

I spotted this cast iron wheel in our local reclamation yard and loved the chunky dimensions as well as the soft, rusted tones. It would have worked equally well in a gravel garden planting, but I had my eye on some ferns so chose to site it in an area of dappled shade under a tree where it could nestle among the groundcover and autumn leaves, almost as if it had been abandoned there as a piece of industrial heritage.

How to achieve the look

Container and composition

As the wheel doesn't have a base as such, I cleared a small area so that it could sit directly on the ground and the plants could eventually root into the soil below. I then filled it with rich garden compost and some leaf mould. I've always loved the striking fern *Dryopteris erythrosora* for its distinctly copper-tinged, young foliage, which slowly matures to a deep green. I love the way it pairs really well with the orange, spiky form of the *Digitalis*. The bold, glossy, almost holly-shaped leaves of the *Cyrtomium* set up a good textural contrast to the wispy *Carex*, and the velvety, strongly marked foliage of the *Impatiens* (which will also produce yellow flowers) adds an exotic twist.

Cultivation and care

The *Digitalis* and *Impatiens* are borderline hardy so while they will survive a mild winter you may want to protect them or lift them over the colder months. Remove the old leaves of the *Dryopteris* and *Cyrtomium* in late winter, if they haven't already died back, to allow the new, fresh fronds to emerge. The *Carex* shouldn't need any attention. Ensure that the planter doesn't dry out, even in winter when it's easy to forget to check whether planters have enough moisture. A light application of fresh compost as a mulch in early spring will help to retain moisture and feed the soil. *Aquilegia canadensis* or *Tulipa* 'Cornuta' (also sold as *Tulipa acuminata*) might be good additions for spring interest.

Plants

- 1 *Digitalis isabelliana* Bella** (= 'Isob007') An exotic foxglove from the Canary Islands. Full sun but will take partial shade. 90cm. RHS H3.
- 2 *Cyrtomium falcatum*** Evergreen fern with glossy foliage. 50cm. AGM. RHS H3, USDA 6a-10b.
- 3 *Impatiens omeiana*** Grown mainly for its foliage. Prefers partial or full shade. 40cm. RHS H3, USDA 6a-9b.
- 4 *Dryopteris erythrosora*** Semi-evergreen fern that can take full sun or full shade. 60cm. AGM. RHS H4, USDA 5a-8b.
- 5 *Carex testacea*** Evergreen grass with fine, arching, olive-green to bronze foliage. Prefers sun but tolerates light shade. 50cm. RHS H5.



Above Airy flowers on wiry stems thrive in Tara's coastal garden; the spherical, purple heads of *Allium sphaerocephalon* float above white-flowered *Oenothera lindheimeri* and clary sage accompanied by bronze fennel.

Left *Lathyrus odoratus* 'Blue Ripple'; Sweet peas are a favourite and Tara grows them every year despite the challenging conditions; *Calendula officinalis* self-sows freely in the beds and shingle, as does *Cerinthe major* 'Purpurascens'.

Below The view down the terraced garden to the vegetable beds, chicken run and barbecue terrace. Richly hued flowers in the dahlia patch contrast with the acid-green of *Euphorbia ceratocarpa* in the foreground.





IN BRIEF

Name Full Moon Barn.

What Terraced hillside garden featuring raised beds.

Where East Sussex.

Size Approximately a third of an acre within a one-and-a-half acre site.

Soil A mixture of improved sand and clay.

Climate Coastal and sunny, but windy, with salt-laden gales and sea mist.

Hardiness zone USDA 9.

LEARNING CURVE

In a gradual process of experimentation and discovery, garden and gardener find their feet on a sloping site on the East Sussex coast

WORDS STEPHANIE DONALDSON PHOTOGRAPHS SUZIE GIBBONS

Full Moon Barn is set in a landscape where the undulating High Weald meets the sea. Many would be tempted to do little more than sit back and admire the views, but for Tara Macdonald this was never an option. A knowledgeable plantswoman who trained at RHS Garden Wisley and subsequently spent ten happy years working at Great Dixter, she needed part of the garden to be a place where she could grow some of the plants she loves.

“The setting feels quite Mediterranean, with magnificent, borrowed views of big, open spaces,” says Tara. “In summer when the grasses yellow you

could almost be in Greece. I decided, within the larger, more open, garden, to make an area quite enclosed by the planting – an oasis tucked away from all that nature and the seascapes.”

When Tara and her husband David bought the house there was no garden, just a field with a few stray trees and shrubs and a view-blocking bank of *x Hesperotropsis leylandii* (formerly *x Cuprocyparis leylandii*) along the boundary. The couple decided that the leylandii had to go, and with views opened up and light flooding into the garden, they constructed a series of raised beds leading down the slope from the existing deck in front of the house. Conveniently, building work on the house and a redesign of the

Above Raised beds, overflowing with Tara’s favourite plants, replaced a slippery slope leading down from the deck of Tara’s south-facing house. The sweet peas were grown from Sarah Raven’s Clouds of Scent collection.



As you garden a place you learn what will and won't grow. Over the years I have honed down my choices and come to understand the location

Above The generous deck is sheltered from the prevailing winds and is a perfect place to sit and enjoy the views. Containers bring the garden up to the house and are replanted seasonally.

▷ larger garden had resulted in large quantities of spare soil that could be used to fill the beds.

“As you garden a place you learn what will and won't grow,” says Tara. “I started off not knowing what would work – and coming from Great Dixter I had a long list of plants I wanted to try. As a plant lover I wanted to pack in as much as possible, but I didn't want anything to dominate. It has been trial and error: things would blow over, get too big, or break in the wind; sometimes I would allow self-sowers to remain and then they would take over and I'd have to remove them all. Gradually, over the years, I have honed down my choices and come to understand the location.” The planting has changed over time and Tara now invests in plants such as irises and grasses, achilleas and hardy geraniums – “plants that do fine, withstand the conditions and settle in well”. The one exception is a raised bed devoted to a dazzling array of dahlias. “That's definitely inspired by Great Dixter,” says Tara, “but in this location it only works because I grow them through netting to give them essential support.”

She loves the manageable size of her garden, and appreciates its sunny aspect, which means that

plants do well provided they get enough water. “But I also love the changeability that comes with the coastal location,” she says, “even though it can be very bleak in winter when the wind howls.”

Tara now works as a freelance garden designer and plant consultant, but she has also been exploring other aspects of her creativity by recently completing a BA Designer Maker course, graduating with flying colours. Her degree project was a piece called Regeneration, which involved dyeing silks with dyes made from plants that reclaim damaged land, including ivy, brambles, nettles, birch, gorse and dandelions, and then using the fabric to make ethereal, silk flowers to represent healing and hope. She has become interested in growing dye plants such as woad, *Anthemis tinctoria* and marigolds, but says her garden is not a dyer's garden – although it may become one in the future.

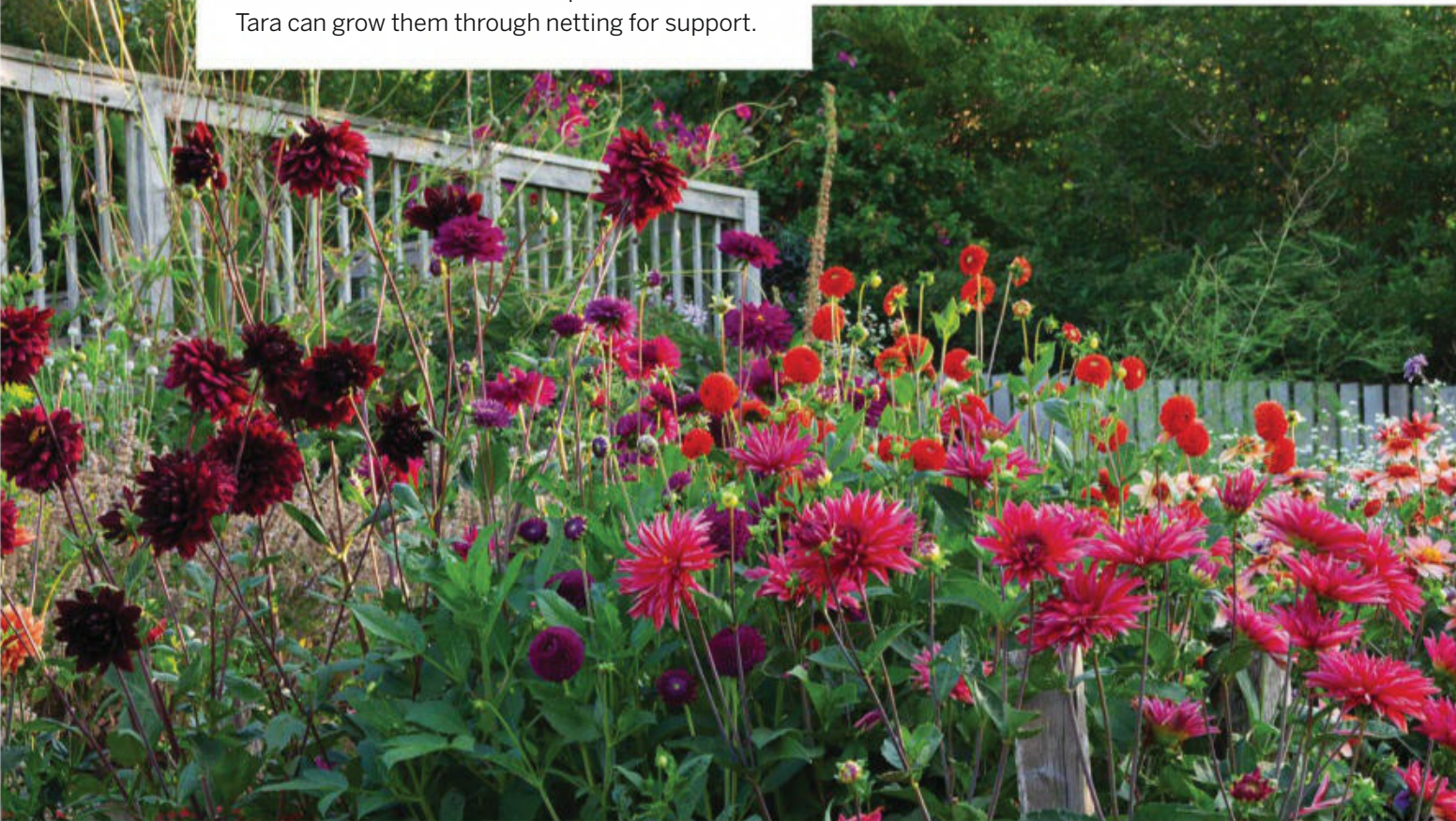
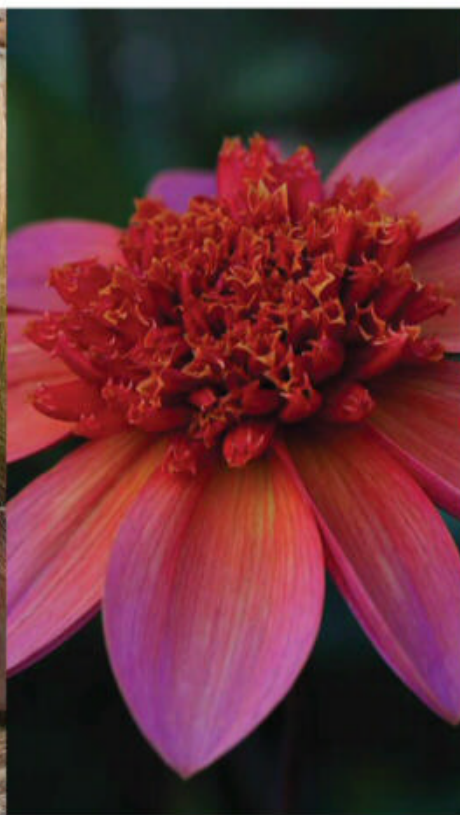
“Working at Great Dixter has really helped me understand gardening as a creative and playful process, from growing dahlias to taking my creativity in other directions. I always say you can take the girl out of Great Dixter, but you can't take Great Dixter out of the girl.” ■



Above The raised beds become a tapestry of colour and texture in high summer. Interwoven plants include *Nicotiana sylvestris*, *Erysimum* 'Bowles's Mauve', feathery bronze fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare* 'Purpureum'), the horned spurge *Euphorbia ceratocarpa* and *Nepeta grandiflora* 'Dawn to Dusk'.

Right Pots of *Stipa tenuissima* on the deck provide contrast with their more colourful companions – *Dahlia* 'Totally Tangerine', and the long-flowering *Salvia* 'Amistad', underplanted with rabbit's tail grass (*Lagurus ovatus*).

Below Dahlias in vibrant colours range from deep crimson, through hot pinks to scarlets. They have their own bed for maximum impact and so that Tara can grow them through netting for support.



CHOICE CUTS

A gardener as well as a renowned potter, dahlia devotee Frances Palmer uses her own blooms to adorn her vessels, grown in her imaginatively conceived Connecticut garden

WORDS KENDRA WILSON PHOTOGRAPHS NGOC MINH NGO





IN BRIEF

What Artist's garden, with each plant chosen for its qualities as a cut flower.

Where Connecticut, USA.

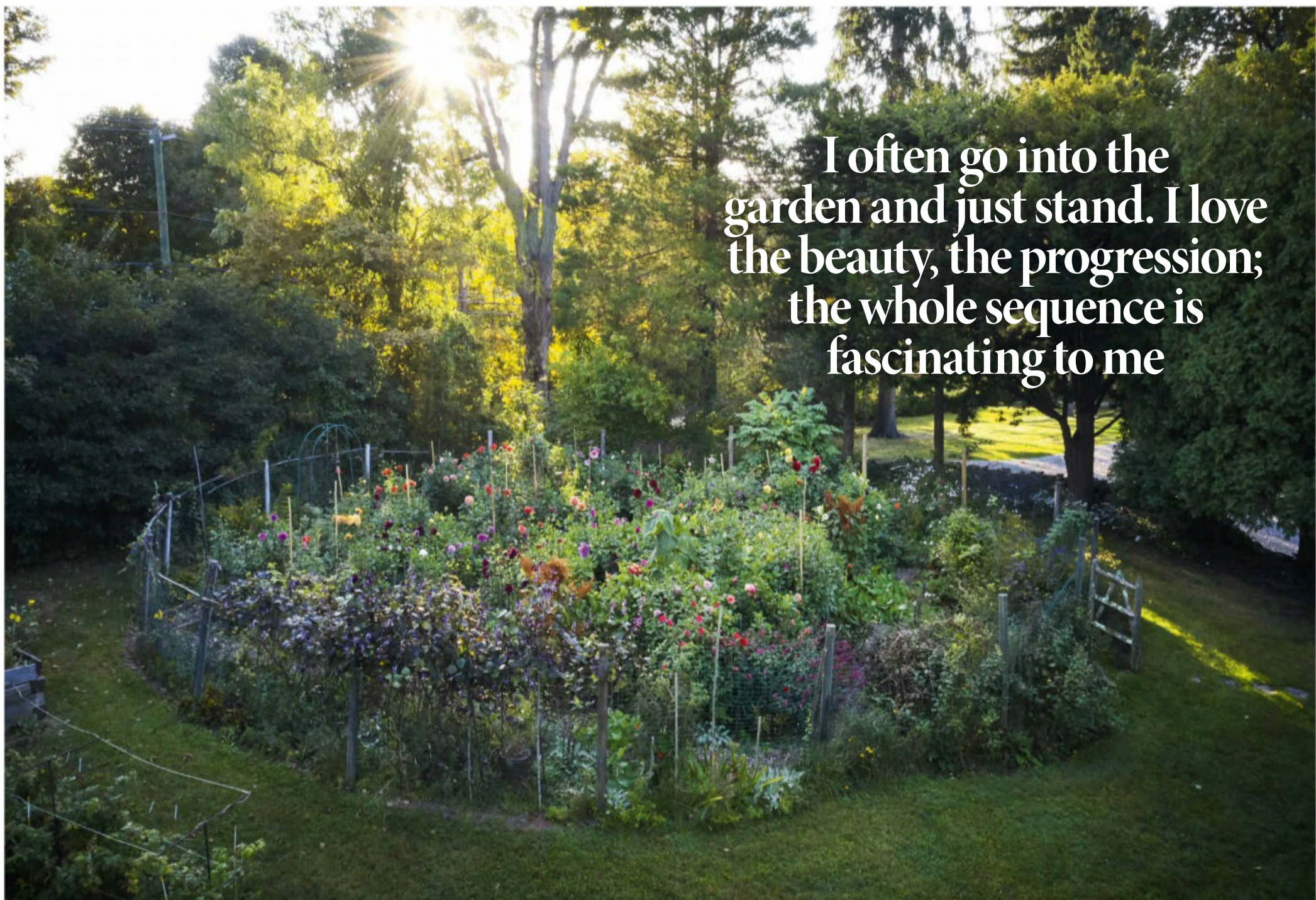
Size One acre within a six-acre site.

Soil Good, friable loam.

Climate Hot and muggy in summer; snowbound in winter.

Hardiness zone USDA 6a.

The first of Frances Palmer's two cutting gardens, which spills on to a repurposed tennis court, housing over 500 dahlias between them. The studio barn was built around salvaged beams from a local 1790s house.



I often go into the garden and just stand. I love the beauty, the progression; the whole sequence is fascinating to me

Above

Frances soon ran out of space in the original cutting garden, which her husband cut into the lawn before fencing it against deer. Besides dahlias, she grows a progression of flowers from spring onwards for putting in her vases, scrupulously documenting her arrangements with photography.

Facing page

1 Dahlia 'Honka' Single orchid (or star) dahlia, one of the classics that Frances loves. A central disc is ringed with single, incurved florets of lemon-yellow. Flowerhead width 10cm, H 1m. AGM*. RHS H3[†].

2 Dahlia 'Myrtle's Brandy' Classed as small and Formal Decorative in the USA (double flowers, with broad, flat petals that are bluntly pointed and evenly arranged). W 10-15cm, H 1-1.5m. RHS H3.

3 Dahlia 'Helena Rutherford Ely' Heirloom dahlia from Meadowburn Farm in New Jersey, passed down since the turn of the 20th century. Informal Decorative. W 20-25cm, H 1.2m. RHS H3.

4 Dahlia 'Deuil du Roi Albert' Rare, European cultivar from 1936. This one differs from the listed, two-toned flower of purple and white: "It morphs beautifully," says Frances. W 10cm, H 90cm-1.2m. RHS H3.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.

[†]Hardiness ratings given where available.

W

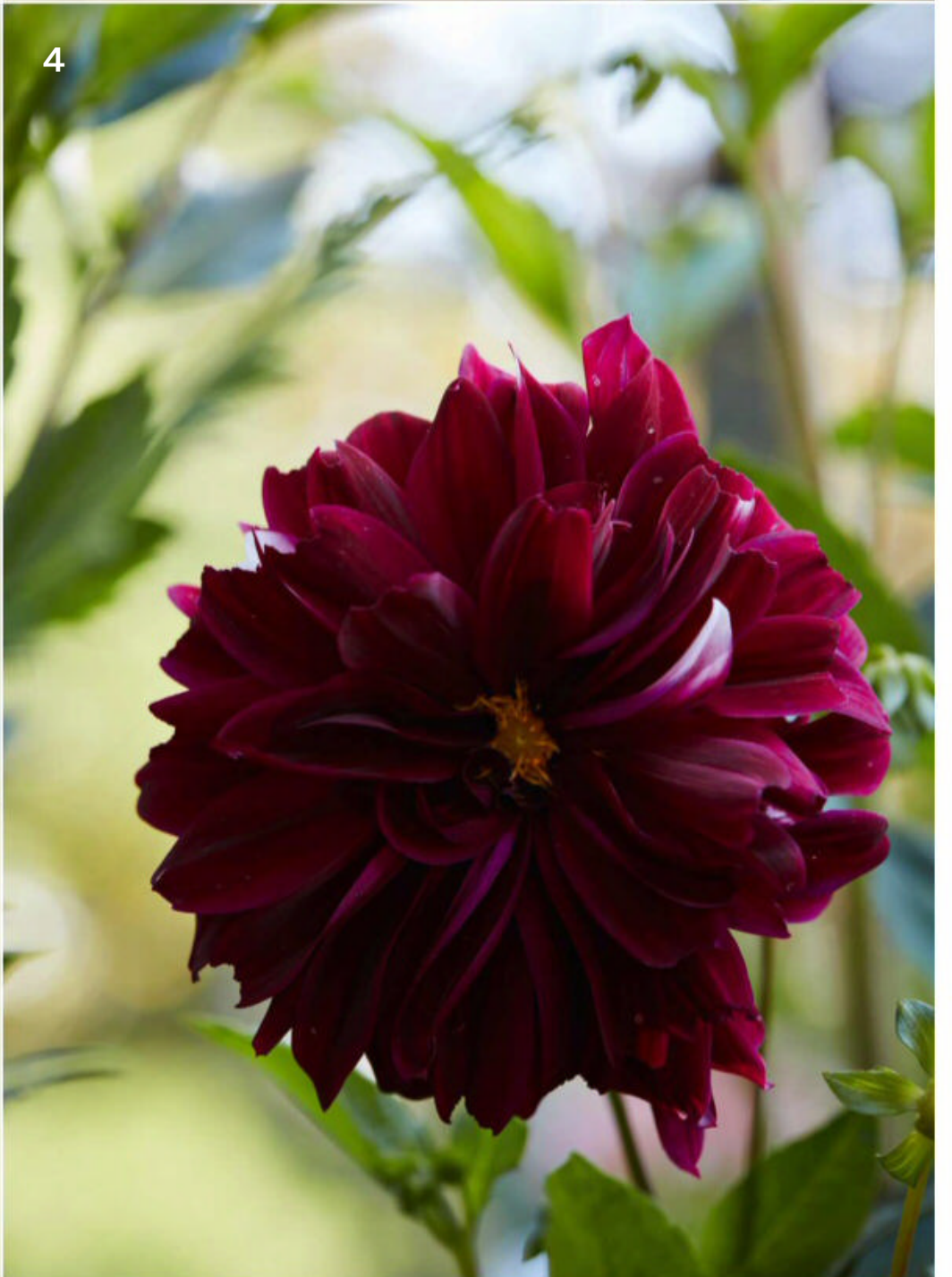
eston, Connecticut has a certain glamour, having long attracted artists, actors and writers who began to come here in the 1930s from New York City. An hour's train journey plus a ten-minute drive into pretty, wooded countryside could not make a stronger contrast in late summer between sweltering urban life

and cool, breezy home, possibly in a former farmhouse on several acres. Although Weston has been discovered by developers, it is still characterised to a large extent by open spaces and by properties that are visually unenclosed, with smaller gardens within a larger yard or property. These are generally fenced off from herbivores if residents hope to cultivate anything more than native plants.

When Frances Palmer moved with her husband and children to their Weston house 27 years ago, she was already a potter, documenting her work by taking photographs of her vessels, filled with flowers. Frances had relied on the flower markets in New York but now she had the space to grow what she wanted, and very soon she had a dahlia encounter, which can be reasonably described as love at first sight. It was in the dahlia garden at San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, and Frances wasted no time in asking the gardeners all about them, proceeding immediately to an annual dahlia show nearby, and sourcing some of the best growers – who have been supplying her with tubers ever since.

Frances now has more than 500 dahlias growing in a round, fenced garden that she urged her husband Wally to make at his earliest convenience, and in a tennis court garden – which he in turn suggested to her when she started to run out of growing space. "I thought it was kind of hilarious," she says, recalling that they'd had the old court newly fenced,

To continue turn to page 87 ►

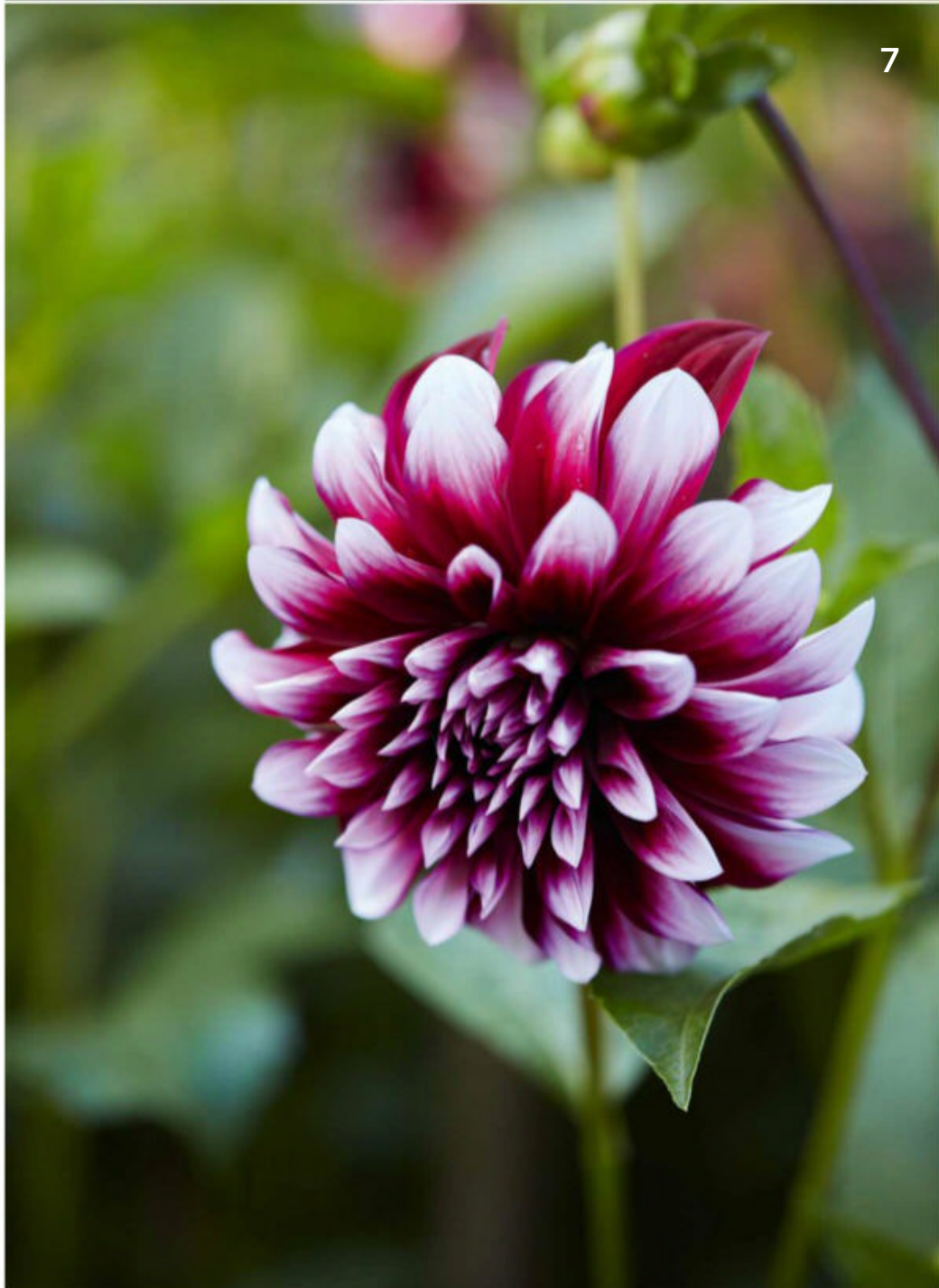
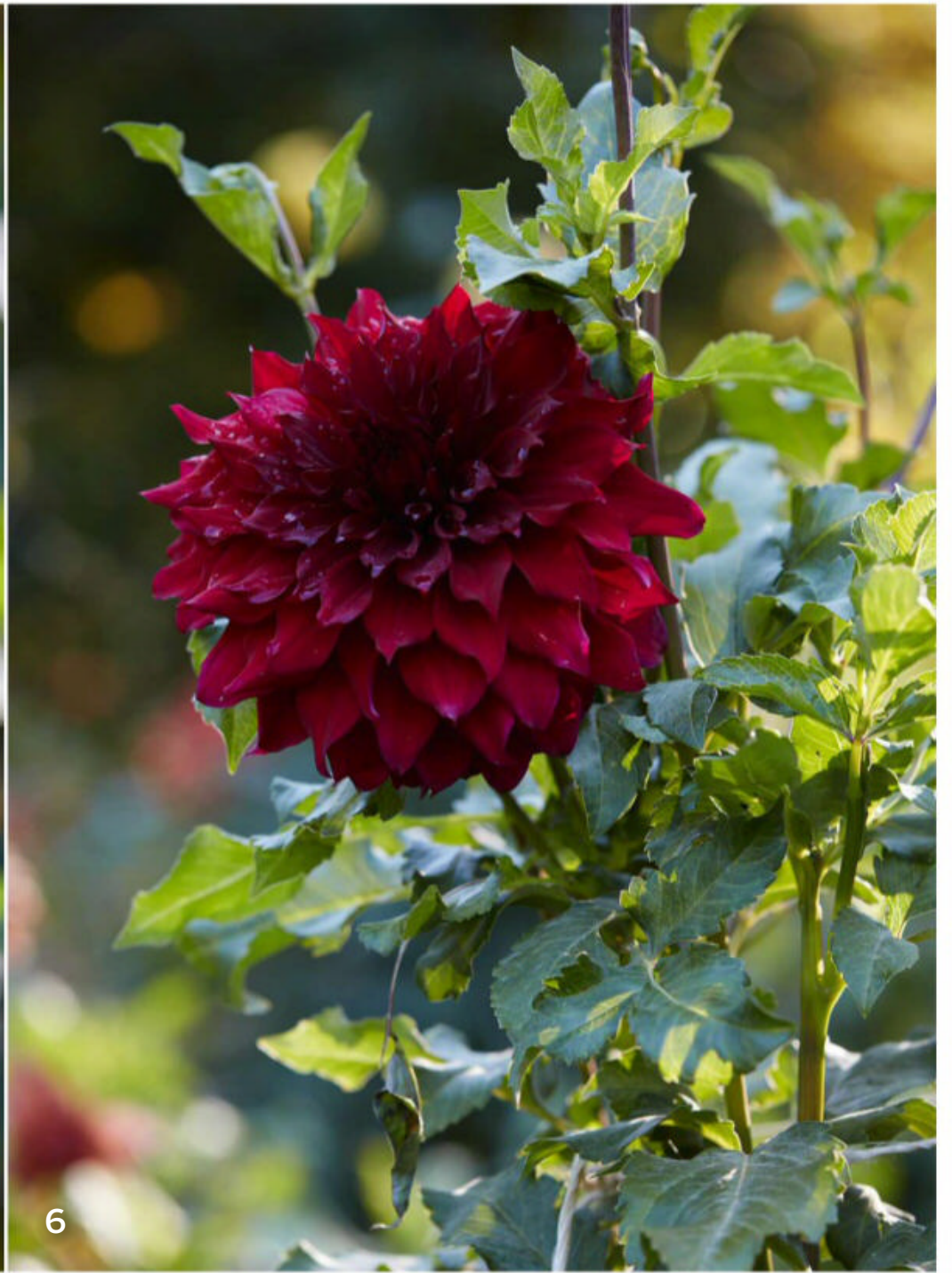


I select a range of bloom sizes to suit every vase shape. Most often, though, I want to show off a single dahlia, to marvel at the geometry





The 1930s tennis court was wasted on a family uninterested in tennis, so Frances's husband Wally suggested using it as a further cutting garden. The ring fence keeps deer out, and bears away from the beehives. Frances consciously grows plants for pollinators as well as photogenic ornamentals, and encourages self-seeding in the cracks of the court's surface.





9



10

▷ in the vain hope that someone in the family might use it for its intended purpose. Now, it is a kind of aerated walled garden, with 30 raised beds and a row of beehives at one end. The chain-link perimeter is efficient at protecting plants from deer, and honey from bears – it is beautifully utilitarian, while ageing gracefully. “There are lots of cracks,” says Frances. “I let anything come up that wants to seed in there. I don’t believe in weeds.”

In order to encourage bees, Frances has been growing more pollinator plants and natives but mainly, her focus is on growing flowers that will give scale and context to her work as a highly sought-after ceramicist. “My choices are limited to what I can cut and put in a vase,” she says. It is not a bad limitation: flower production begins with the first bulbs of spring, continuing with bearded irises, peonies and roses, as well as annuals such as zinnias, poppies and sunflowers. “It’s all happening,” she laughs, “it’s crazy out there.”

Frances is as productive as her cutting gardens, starting the morning outdoors at 5.30am and working in increments throughout the day. “Two or three times a day I go out there and just stand. I love the beauty,” she says. “The progression, the whole sequence is fascinating to me.” With dahlias in particular, she admires the variety of shape and colour on a single plant, and the way the flowers age and transform as the season goes on. “I select a range of bloom sizes to suit every vase shape,” she explains. “Most often I want to show off a single dahlia, to marvel at the geometry – but a whole bowlful is stupendous.”

Frances started off collecting classic dahlias, such as ‘Zorro’, ‘Spartacus’ and ‘Clyde’s Choice’, as well as heirloom dahlias, buying tubers with provenance from places such as Meadowburn Farm in New Jersey, an historic garden designed between 1881 and 1920 by author Helena Rutherford Ely, a founding member of the Garden Club of America. On this foundation, Frances buys new cultivars every year. She is a true connoisseur, with a master’s degree in art history, and she has taught ▷

5 Dahlia ‘Old Gold’ Rare, heirloom dahlia from 1947. Petals are orange, intensifying in hue towards the centre; colours may change slightly over time. Small, Formal Decorative. W 10-15cm, H 1.5m. RHS H3.

6 Dahlia ‘Zorro’ Classic dahlia, intensely dark red, which doesn’t fade in the sun. Informal Decorative with petals that are slightly rolled at the tips, in an irregular arrangement. W 25cm, H 1.2m. AGM. RHS H3.

7 Dahlia ‘Meadowburn Clara Helen’ Heirloom dahlia from Meadowburn Farm, the former home of influential American gardening figure Helena Rutherford Ely. Bi-colour magenta and white. W 10-15cm, H 1.5m. RHS H3.

8 Dahlia ‘Papageno’ Introduced in 1972. Formal Decorative dinnerplate dahlia with peach-to-yellow, slightly twisted petals. Large and reliable with exceptional foliage. W 25cm, H 1.2m. RHS H3.

9 Dahlia ‘Bodacious’ Giant, flame-like blooms of orange-red with yellow tips and undersides. Informal Decorative, 21st-century dinnerplate dahlia with twisted petals. Spectacular. W 28cm, H 1.5m. RHS H3.

10 Dahlia ‘Arthur Hambley’ Rare, heirloom, dinnerplate dahlia from 1955. Formal Decorative with evenly spaced petals of cool lilac, shimmering bronze towards the centre. W 25cm, H 1-1.5m. RHS H3.



When things don't go according to plan, that's not a failure – you need to pivot and come up with another strategy

Above

Colour does not stop with the dahlias: Frances grows “all sorts of marigolds” in both cutting gardens, with a range of tomatoes and several helianthus, salvia and zinnia cultivars. Here she mixes orange with orange: *Tagetes erecta* ‘Giant Orange’, and slightly taller *Tithonia rotundifolia*.

Facing page

11 *Dahlia* ‘Otto’s Thrill’ Clear-pink, dinnerplate dahlia on strong stems, with fresh-green foliage. Informal Decorative, fully double blooms; 1956 heirloom cultivar. W 25cm, H 1.1m. AGM. RHS H3.

12 *Dahlia* ‘Lady Darlene’ Dinnerplate dahlia with fully double, involute petals. This one is the old type of Lady Darlene, no longer available to buy. Frances suggests ‘Bracken Sarah’ for similar colour.

13 Single-flowered early *Dahlia coccinea* hybrid (unnamed) Can be grown from seed; these descendants from specimens collected in Mexico in the 16th century will develop tubers in their first season.

14 *Dahlia* ‘Lavender Perfection’ Dinnerplate dahlia from Kiev with two-toned, fully double flowers. Formal Decorative heirloom, introduced in 1951. W 25cm, H 1-1.5m. RHS H3.

▷ classes on all aspects of dahlias at the New York Botanical Garden. “Her curiosity knows no bounds,” says photographer Ngoc Minh Ngo, who has known Frances for more than 20 years, “and she also has an incredible work ethic.”

In the time-honoured tradition of dahlia growing, Frances’s technique is workmanlike: “I grow them in tomato cages,” she says, of the cylindrical structures that she interplants with bulbs. “Dahlia stems are brittle and once they flop, you can’t straighten them; they’ll just break. You need to get your ducks in a row as you’re planting them.” After sprouting, and during a dry spell, Frances waters them with an old sprinkler in the round garden, and drip irrigation in the tennis court, every two days.

If there is anything that non-natives struggle with in Connecticut, it’s the humidity. The torpor of August means that it can be difficult for a person to spend time outdoors in the middle of the day, and dahlias visibly lose interest. “They just kind of stop, no matter what you do,” says Frances, who nurtures them with seaweed emulsion spray and other organic fertilisers. Luckily they perk up again in September once the weather starts to cool down.

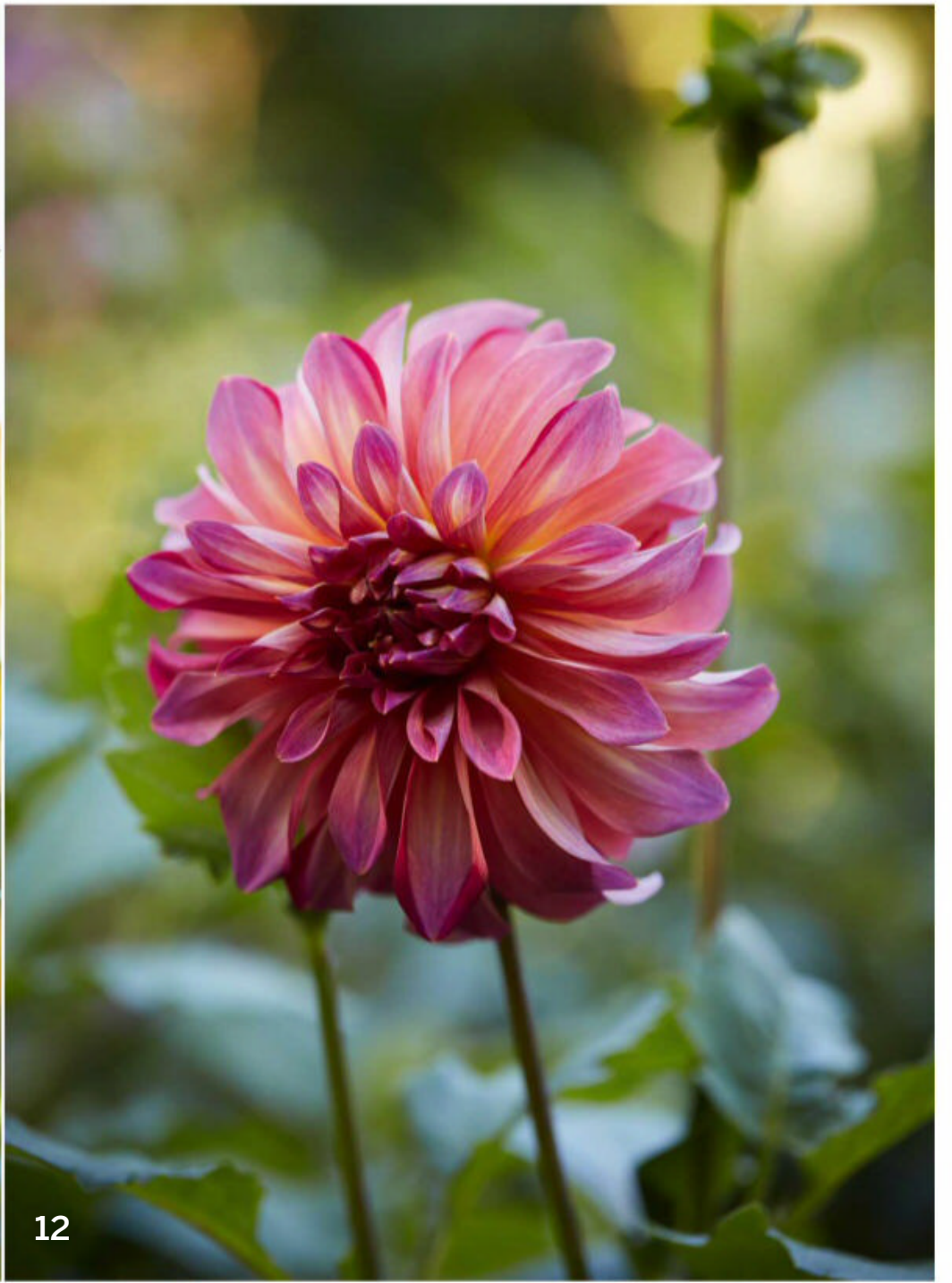
In both gardening and ceramics, Frances is intrigued by the idea of a creative process in which she is not in complete control of the outcome. “When things don’t go according to plan, that’s not a failure,” she says. “You need to pivot and come up with another strategy.” Sowing a seed or throwing a pot is the beginning of a journey that is driven more by the nature of the materials than by the person: “I see them as very intertwined: in the end, when I have a flower that I put into a vessel, we have worked on this together.” ■

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Frances’s work at francespalmerpottery.com
Follow Frances on Instagram @francespalmer



11



12



13



14

ROSA 'LA BELLE SULTANE'

'I like to have bowls of roses on my desk. The alchemy of nature, and especially of the smell of roses is in the complex layering of ingredients, often at infinitesimal levels, the intricacy of which is impossible to imitate and is crucial and decisive in the character for the entire complex.'



A SENSITIVITY TO SMELL

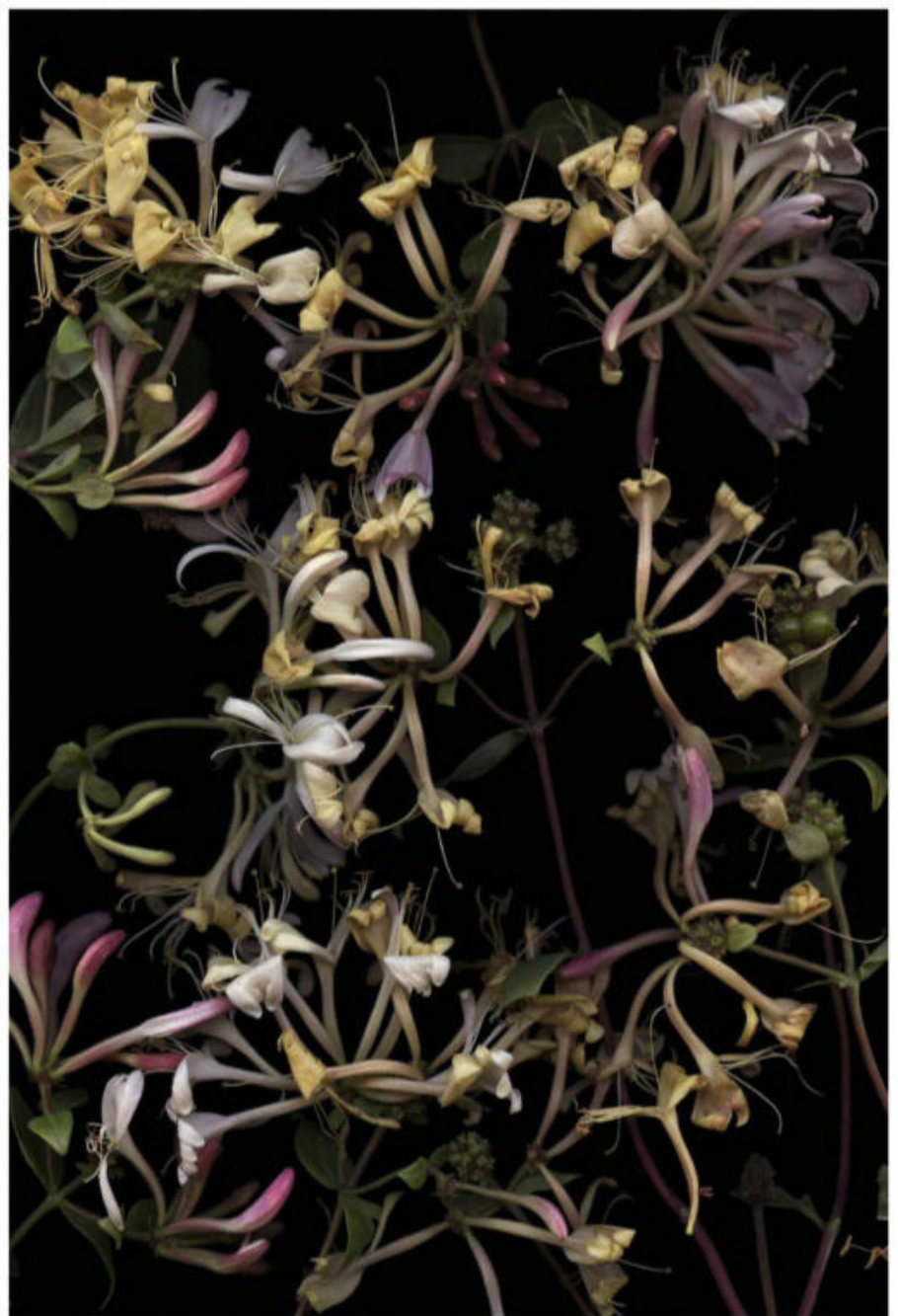
In this extract from her new book, Isabel Bannerman explains her need to marry dramatic, botanical images with poetry and prose to conjure the scents of the gardening year – and the emotions and memories they evoke

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS **ISABEL BANNERMAN**



ANGEL'S TRUMPETS (*BRUGMANSIA*)

'The smell map of late summer begins to tip into decay, hinting at rot and regret. But not yet. The warm nights welcome the scents of Datura and star jasmine.'

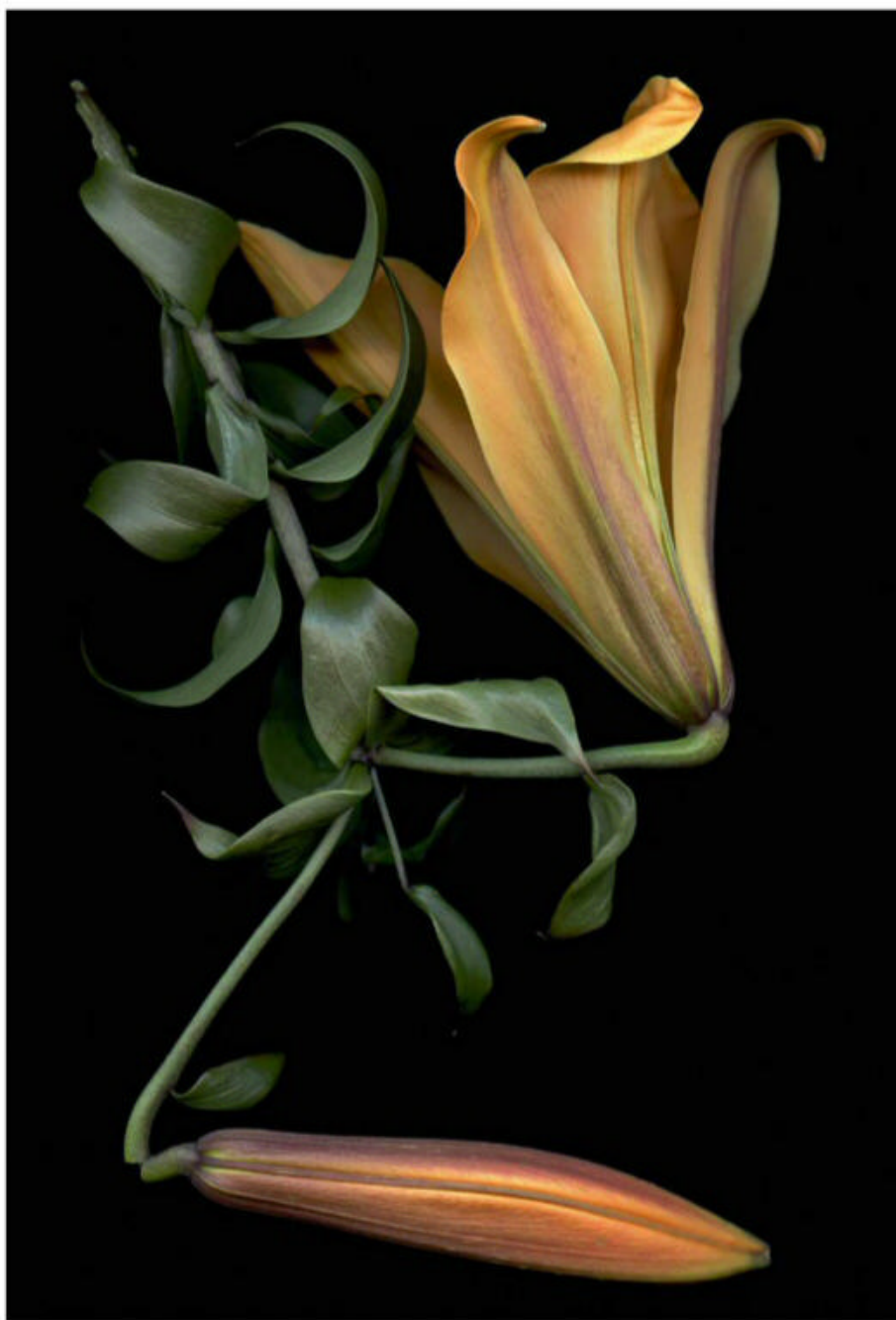


HONEYSUCKLE (*LONICERA PERICLYMENUM*)

'The personal associations that are bound up with scents are notoriously vivid; often smell recall has an almost hallucinatory clarity, usually of events charged with emotion.'

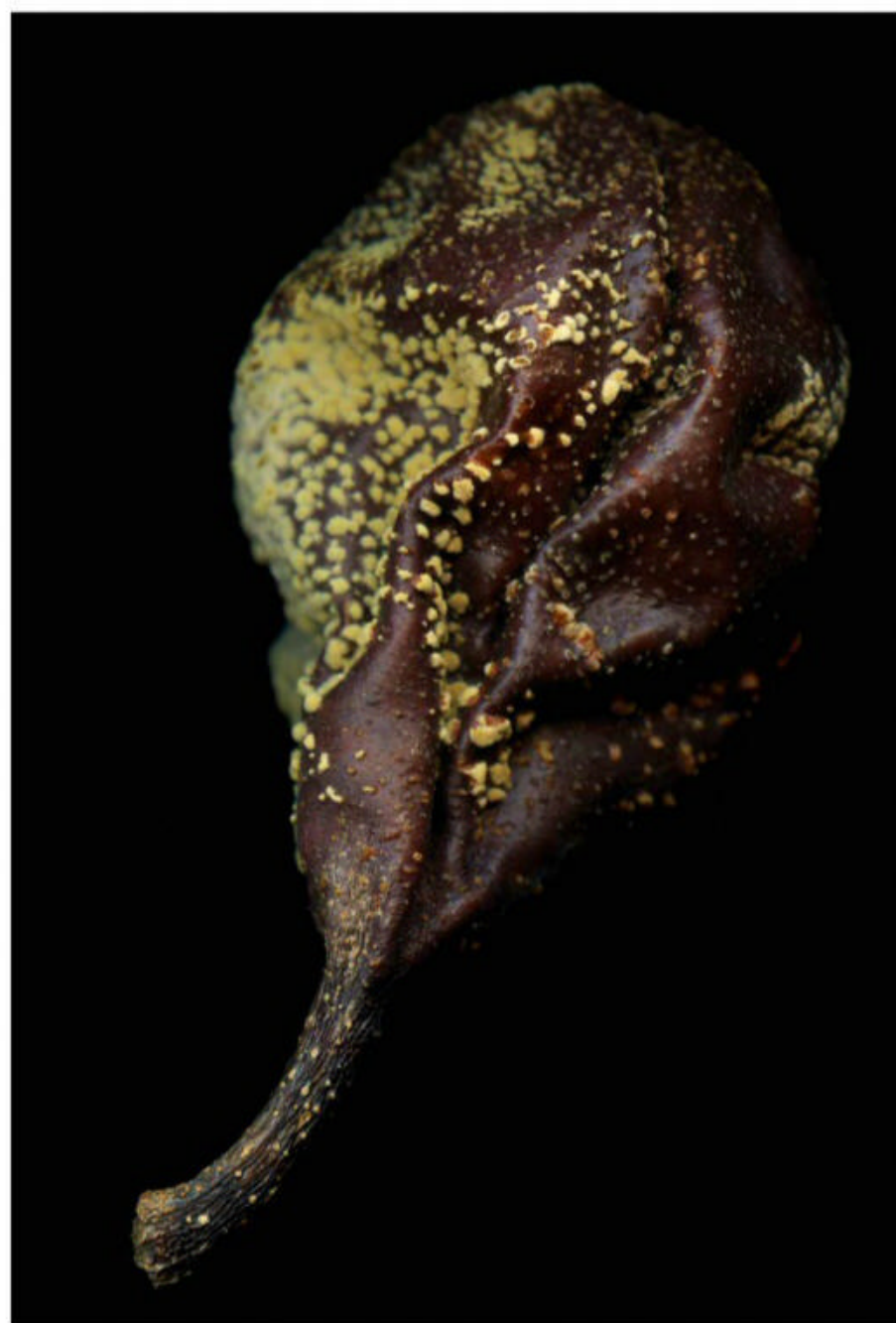
I obsess about smell, hedonistically and emotionally. The sense of smell is a layer of experience somewhat blasted aside by its closely allied twin sense of taste, and the profoundly dominant vision, and perhaps – as almost nowhere is truly silent any more – the even more dominant auditory world. I became interested in whether smell is a diminishing experience. My reading for my book *Scent Magic – Notes from a Gardener* suggested that pollution, particulates, toxins and gases, actively destroy the fine volatiles detected by living organisms in the air and earth and sea. Pollution and distraction have ambushed our wellbeing. As I was trying to write about the impossibility of writing effectively about smell, I began to nose around for great writers' solutions to this problem. How and how much have writers considered the lilies of the field and how they smell. I began grazing on literature and gathering in my stores of quotes. For instance, in Jonathan Franzen's *Purity* I loved this passage: 'heaven ... Two scents at once, distinct like layers of cooler and warmer water in a lake – some instantly flowering tropical tree's perfume, a complex lawn-smell from a pasture that goats were grazing – flooded through her open window. Heaven ...'

In 2003 I had started making images of plants on my flatbed scanner. A very intense process that I tend to indulge in late at night, in the dark, which is how I discovered how to make it work. Making images with plants is a messy, sticky, visceral operation, all floating pollen and oozings. I have to keep ▶



LILIUM 'AFRICAN QUEEN'

'Our senses define the edge of consciousness... It is easy for us to take our sense of smell for granted because we exercise it involuntarily: as we breathe, we smell.'



ROTTING PEAR

'Of all the seasons autumn most provokes meditation, philosophising, a drift from description into redolence, to seeing through things as the leaves leave, a shift to elegy.'

▷ the plants cool and work fast before they collapse. In the morning I often find my office, a small file-filled submarine, filled with scent. Many flowers emit more scent when stressed or dying in a last gasp for paternity. The pictures happened then, by a kind of accident and they seemed to have an ethereal otherness, a bit like scent. Another thing that ignited my inner child. I wanted to write a book about the uncanny feeling, the unsettling disorder, the subjective, the inadequacies of the intellect, the obscurity of intuition. These illustrations appear as an adjunct, but in fact they were the instigator of this quest because I was looking for a way to make the images have purpose, and at the same time I realised I wanted to write about gardening and smell.

What makes the heart leap and breathing quicken? Twilight; the gone summers; butterflies; moths; sensuality; synaesthesia; perception; olfaction; balance and ecology; catastrophe and the groping for meaning – all well up and beg for attention. How enriching would it be to attend to these questions. Age diminishes the senses. Sight, hearing, touch, taste and, by equal degrees, smell evaporate, depart, harden, muffle and dim. We live in a constantly altering state, swimming in flows and currents of perception, much of which is invisible or goes unnoticed. To take time now to analyse a minuscule, highly personal, bandwidth of all that vastness of experience, to shine a small beam and encourage the hedonistic pleasures of smelling and reading what others have smelled became my mission. □



**ELF CUPS (*SARCOSCYPHA*
AUSTRIACA)**

'By the ends of our lives our heads are full of extinct smell, the extinct smells of childhood. A rotting wooden fence long ago treated with creosote, smelling of tar and decayed earthy mushroom smell.'

BOOK DETAILS

This extract is taken from *The Star-Nosed Mole: An Anthology of Scented Garden Writing* by garden designer and writer Isabel Bannerman, published by Pimpernel Press on 23 September, priced £20.

IN BRIEF

Name Bluebell Cottage.

What A densely planted garden, which showcases the wide range of plants that will thrive in the area.

Where Cheshire.

Size One-and-a-half-acre garden within a six-acre site.

Soil Rich, sandy loam.

Climate A benign mild and damp climate.

Hardiness zone USDA 8.

The zestful planting of the main borders of the garden seems to be a continuum of colourful plants but they are bisected by grass paths. In the foreground the punchy, red flowers of *Monarda* 'Jacob Cline' float around the purple flowers of *Salvia nemorosa* 'Amethyst'.

A photograph of a garden filled with various plants. In the foreground, there are tall purple spikes of flowers, possibly Salvia, and red, spiky flowers. Behind them are large, feathery white grasses. In the background, there are more green plants and a dense line of trees.

Bright and breezy

Packed with vitality and colour, Bluebell Cottage in Cheshire is an outstanding example of perennial planting and a destination garden for plant lovers far and wide

WORDS JOHN HOYLAND PHOTOGRAPHS FIONA LEA / GAP PHOTOS

Fifteen years ago, businesswoman and award-winning amateur gardener Sue Beesley fulfilled a long-standing ambition to buy a run-down nursery and garden. After a lot of hard work, and some mistakes along the way, she has, with the help of her team, transformed the place into a thriving business and created an elegant, plant-filled garden that is popular with gardeners from around Britain.

The site is in the lush Cheshire landscape bounded by the hills of North Wales to the west and the foothills of the Pennines to the northeast. The garden sits next to a curve in the Trent and Mersey Canal and its billowing borders echo the distant, rolling treescape and evoke the sweep of the water as it flows gently past.

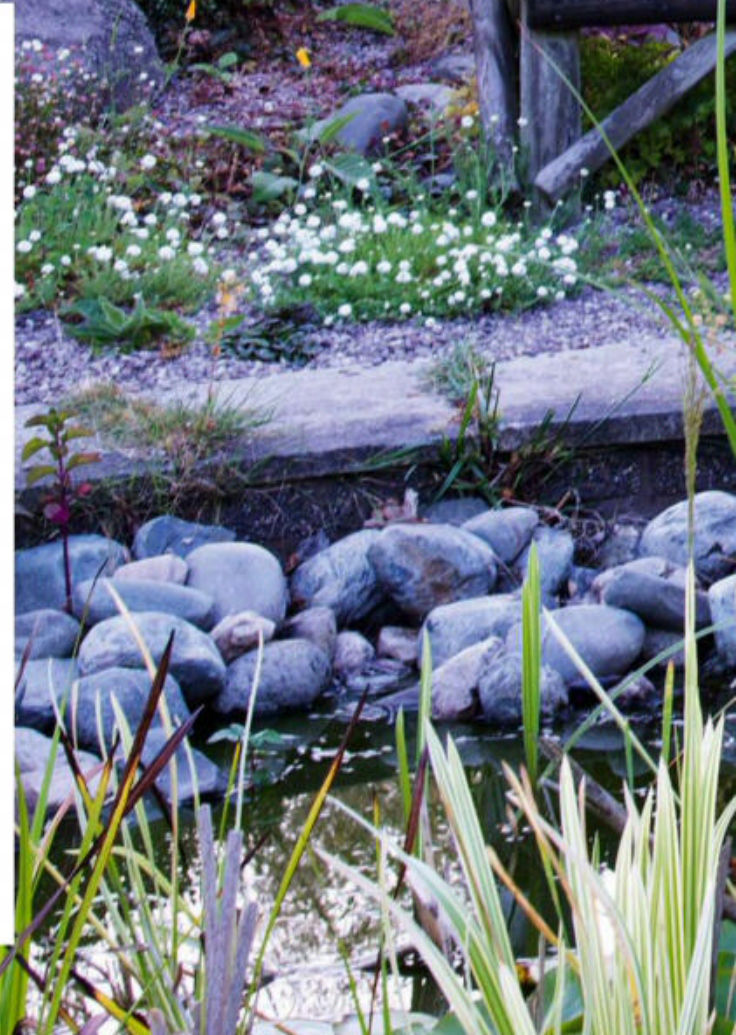
The main beds are densely planted with mainly herbaceous perennials that respond to even the slightest breeze. “Nothing stands still in this part of the garden,” says Sue. “Here I’ve chosen mainly plants that accentuate movement.” Angel’s fishing rod (*Dierama pulcherrimum*) sways gently while the tall stems of *Helianthus salicifolius* dance in the background and the area is filled with the ripple of grasses, from tall *Miscanthus* and *Calamagrostis* to the short tufts of *Stipa tenuissima* ‘Wind Whispers’, a cultivar that Sue recommends because of the way it does not become matted.

The planting is exuberant and close-packed. Looking across the area, what the eye sees are diaphanous curtains of plants but, in fact, wide, grass paths crisscross the garden, meaning you can lose yourself among the plants, taking time to linger on one of the many benches that Sue has placed in the garden.

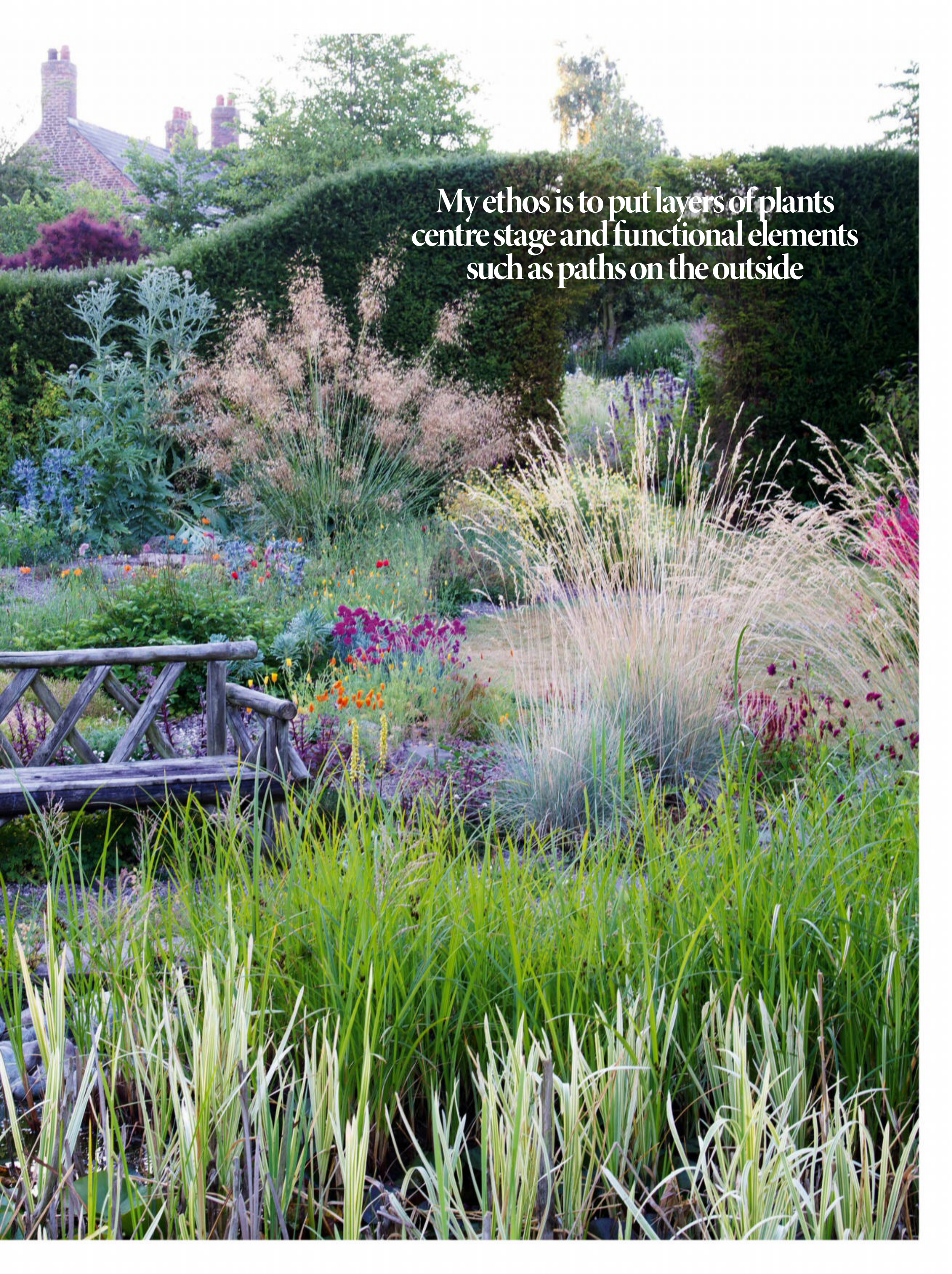
“I point out to visitors that in a classic British garden borders are planted around a lawn – here plants are in the middle and grass paths run around and through the plantings. It doesn’t look like it but there are paths within three feet of every plant so we can get in to maintain them. I suppose that is my ethos – put layers of plants centre stage and put functional elements such ▶

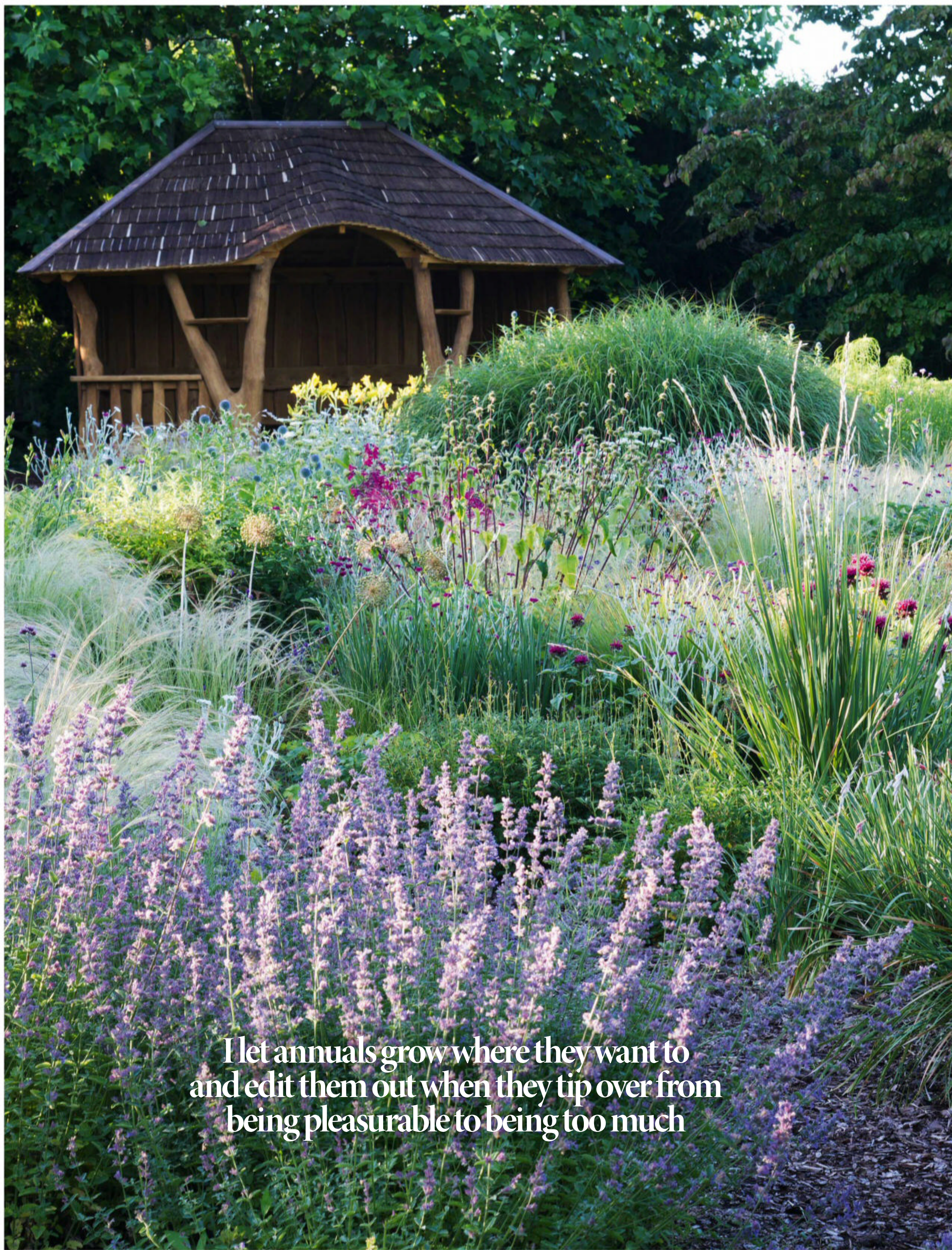
Right There are seats placed throughout the garden to encourage visitors to linger. In the background of the dry garden the silver stems of cardoons, *Cynara cardunculus*, stand out against the yew hedge.

Below A drift of *Helenium* ‘Sahin’s Early Flowerer’ sits in front of *Calamagrostis acutiflora* ‘Karl Foerster’. The metal sculptures represent the seedheads of alliums and were created for the garden by local artist Joy Ladds.



My ethos is to put layers of plants
centre stage and functional elements
such as paths on the outside





I let annuals grow where they want to
and edit them out when they tip over from
being pleasurable to being too much



Above In the dry garden the soft-red flowers of *Persicaria affinis* and the seedheads of the clover-like *Anthyllis vulneraria* var. *coccinea* carpet the gravel. A cloud of panicles of *Stipa gigantea* dominates the area.

Left Bark paths cut through the beds to give easy access for maintenance. Here the path is bordered by *Nepeta racemosa* 'Walkers Low', which faces *Dierama pulcherrimum*. In the foreground is the upright *Hylotelephium* 'Matrona'.

▷ as paths on the outside.” One of Sue’s favourite plants, the white umbellifer *Cenolophium denudatum*, is threaded through the border. “So many of the umbellifer family are annuals or short-lived but this one is perennial, not a problem seeder and so beautifully light and elegant,” she enthuses. “It is a plant that more people should know.”

The colours are vibrant and punchy. A deep-purple *Salvia nemorosa* ‘Amethyst’ weaves around the flamboyant, red flowers of *Monarda* ‘Jacob Cline’ and the bright-magenta flowers of *Lychnis coronaria* are speckled through large parts of the border. The *Lychnis* behaves like an annual and, as with the orange-flowered *Papaver atlanticum*, Sue allows them to self-seed. “I don’t consciously place annuals but rather let them grow where they want to and edit them out if they are in the wrong place or when they tip over from being pleasurable to being too much.”

A path through an arch in a tall yew hedge leads from the brouhaha of this part of the garden to the quiet and calm of an enclosed gravel area where the heat seems to rise from the rocks and stones. Three huge clumps of *Stipa gigantea* dominate, on a carpet of persicarias and low-growing sedums, dotted around with *Dianthus carthusianorum*, tiny pulsatillas and mounds of *Baptisia*.

In contrast, beyond the dry garden is a section enclosed by tall trees. Shady and cool, it is the perfect place for epimediums, beesias and another of Sue’s favourites, tall thalictrums. “I don’t have the collecting gene but I have a lot of thalictrums – I do love them,” she says. “When you look at them, they are 99 per cent air and one per cent plant, all light and delicate.” And, throughout the garden, in all her plantings, that sensation of lightness and delicacy is exactly what Sue has achieved. ■

USEFUL INFORMATION

Address Bluebell Cottage, Lodge Lane, Dutton, nr Warrington, Cheshire WA4 4HP. **Tel** 01928 713718.

Web bluebellcottage.co.uk **Open** Garden and nursesey open Wednesday to Saturday, 10am-5pm.

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The return of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show

After two postponements, the RHS Chelsea Flower Show is back. Add a different season into the mix, and this year's event is bound to be special. Among the myriad displays, the RHS is featuring two of its own gardens, including Arit Anderson's *BBC One Show* and RHS Garden of Hope (pictured), which highlights how growing plants can nurture our souls and provide hope for the future. Find out more about the show and some of the highlights in our coverage over the following pages.

CHELSEA 2021 PREVIEW

Show details

Opening dates 21-26 September 2021.

Buying tickets

Advance purchase only, and tickets are limited. Go to:

theticketfactory.com/rhs/online/tickets/rhs-chelsea-flower-show to check availability.

Gardens Illustrated at Chelsea

Come and see us at **Stand EA430** on Eastern Avenue, where you can meet the team, enjoy an exclusive show subscription offer and browse our latest issue alongside a range of quality *Gardens Illustrated* products.

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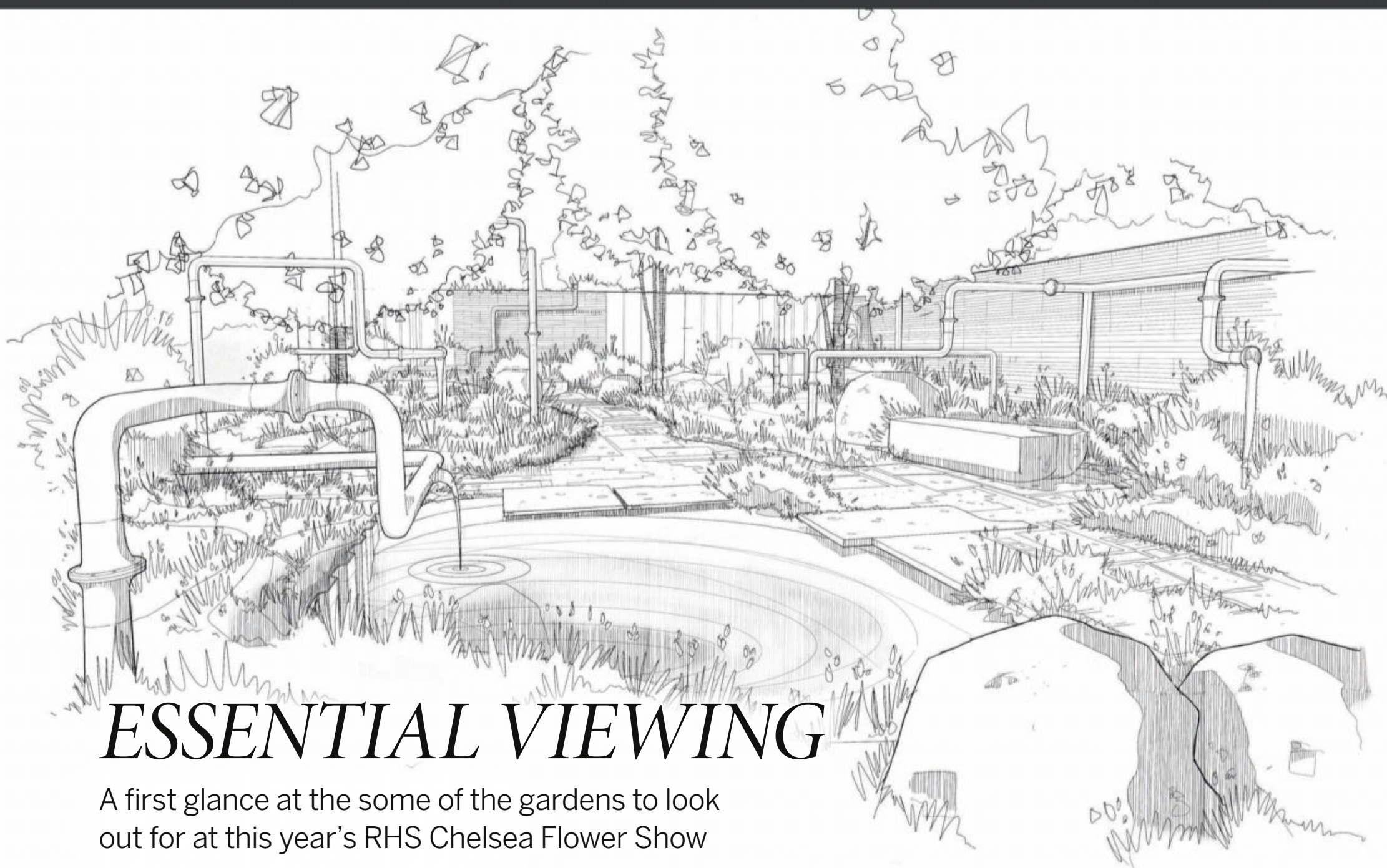
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ESSENTIAL VIEWING

A first glance at the some of the gardens to look out for at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show

WORDS ANNIE GATTI

The M&G Garden



PROFILE

Designers Harris Bugg Studio
(Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg)

Chelsea history Hugo Bugg: 2014 (Gold) and 2106 (Gold); Charlotte Harris: 2017 (Gold)

Plot MA320

Sponsor M&G Investments

Contractor Crocus

Theme An urban pocket park that connects people to nature while embracing the industrial elements found in cities

Contact 01392 927172 (Exeter studio), 020 8191 7131 (London studio), harrisbugg.com

The industrial pipework that weaves architecturally through this garden at heights dropping from 3.5m to 60cm sets this pocket park firmly in the town or city. It is used as a device to connect the various parts of the 22m x 13m community space, and to frame views. It is also one of the many examples of how found materials from the urban landscape can be repurposed to become objects of beauty. The boundary walls, of hand-made London clay bricks enhanced by sections of reclaimed sheet piling, form the industrial backdrop to the undulating green space where the canopy-layer trees, including shade-giving *Nyssa sylvatica*, silver-leaved *Hippophae rhamnoides* and *Elaeagnus umbellata*, are examples of species that are particularly resilient to urban climate extremes of wet winters and hot summers.

At the front of the garden, an informal pool, edged with slabs of railway platform that also double as places to rest, provides a habitat for wildlife and a receptacle for water run-off. This is the sunniest part of the garden where plants such as *Echinacea pallida*, *Bupleurum falcatum* and *Euphorbia cornigera* create a meadowy feel. Pieces of elements that might be leftover from a building-site, such as paving, cobbles, sills and bricks, are used to form meandering pathway set in gravel that leads past the pool to a series of seating boulders in silvered oak where small groups of people can enjoy moments of escape, immersed in the layered planting in tones of green, biscuity-brown, yellow and gold that thrives in the dappled shade. Senesced plants add shades of bronze and russet.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- 1 The aerial pipework**, designed in collaboration with Andrew McMullan (mcmullanstudio.com) and constructed by Mike Smith (mikesmithstudio.com), becomes an elegant sculpture through a mix of polished and bronze-like finishes. Splits in the pipe where the contents appear to pour out create moments of surprise.
- 2 Each oak seat** is unique, carved from individual trunks by Thomas Roesler (thomas-roesler.com). They add a sculptural quality as well as providing seating that connects people to nature.
- 3 *Calamagrostis brachytricha***, a hard-working grass that grows in shade and sun, adds texture throughout the garden.
- 4 *Patrinia monandra*** has scores of yellow flowerheads that reach 1m high and illuminate autumn planting schemes.
- 5 *Actaea 'Queen of Sheba'*** adds scent and white spires to an autumn scheme in partial shade. Its dark-brown leaves contrast beautifully with green foliage.
- 6 *Pennisetum alopecuroides 'Cassian's Choice'*** forms graceful clumps of orange-yellow foliage and dusky purple flowers throughout autumn in sunny plantings.



The Florence Nightingale Garden



PROFILE

Designer Robert Myers

Chelsea history 2007 (Gold), 2008 (Gold), 2013 (Gold)

Plot MA322

Sponsor The Burdett Trust for Nursing

Contractor Bowles & Wyer

Theme A courtyard garden in a modern hospital that embodies the principles of Florence Nightingale

Contact 01223 351400 (Cambridge studio), 01885 227377 (Worcestershire studio), robertmyers-associates.co.uk

Viewed from the front, this garden – which celebrates the nursing profession as well as the legacy of social reformer and founder of modern nursing Florence Nightingale – imagines a patient looking out of a hospital window on to a restful courtyard of gently undulating planting, some in dappled shade under birch trees, some in sun. A striking, contemporary pergola in slatted, cross-laminated timber (CLT), cantilevered to allow uninterrupted views, creates a modern-day cloister where patients and staff can walk or sit. Paths emanate from the cloister and wind through the planting, which emerges from mounded beds, creating an immersive effect. The paths widen at the front and back of the garden, allowing spaces for seating.

In keeping with the garden's theme, the planting features a number of medicinal plants, including one of Florence Nightingale's favourites: foxgloves. Here the *Digitalis* genus is represented by *D. ferruginea*, some possibly bearing seedheads to show the beauty of autumnal forms. The calming palette of greens and whites is punctuated in the more open beds with reds, purples and pinks. Nightingale stressed the importance of clean water and good sanitation, represented here by a steel-edged pool at the back of the garden. Other reminders of her life are embodied in the boundary/hospital walls, also made from CLT, in the form of extracts from her letters and the silhouettes of some of her pressed flowers, which are laser-printed on the surface. An ethereal image, taken from a photo of her in her garden and displayed on a Perspex window, suggests that she is still inspiring modern-day nursing.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

1 Cross-laminated timber is a sustainable material, manufactured by layering planks of sawn timber that are glued at perpendicular angles, giving it strength in both directions. This allows it to be used for big spans and cantilevers, as in this pergola made from Douglas fir by CONSTRUKTCLT (construktclt.com), creating a floating effect.

2 The pool is only partially planted so that it retains a calming, reflective surface. The water spills over the inner steel edge into the gap between the outer edge, where it is recirculated to stop algae forming.

3 *Heptacodium miconioides* was chosen for its scented, autumn-flowering blooms, flaky bark and shaggy form.

4 *Dahlia 'Verrone's Obsidian'* is a deep-red, single-flowered cultivar that mixes well with grasses and other autumn-flowering perennials such as sanguisorbas.

5 Star-shaped, bronze roundels set into clay pavers are scaled-up replicas of the badges worn by Nightingale nurses from 1925. The circular design reflects today's Nightingale badge, awarded by Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust.



The Yeo Valley Organic Garden



PROFILE

Designer Tom Massey, supported by Sarah Mead

Chelsea history 2018 (Silver Gilt)

Plot MA323

Sponsor Yeo Valley

Contractor Landscape Associates

Theme A naturalistic and biodiverse garden, planted mainly with organically grown plants and displaying organic principles

Contact 07862 457630, tommassey.co.uk

Yeo Valley farm's organic garden in Somerset, created by Sarah and Tim Mead, was the starting point for this gently sloping garden, which offers diverse habitats to wildlife and a rich selection of native and non-native plants. Sheltered on two sides by a tangled hedgerow of wild roses, hawthorn, field maple, blackthorn and hazel, the garden is lightly divided into three zones. At the back, a shady woodland bank, dominated by weeping birches, is underplanted with ferns and perennials. Here water spills from a rusted steel trough, recalling farmyard drinking troughs, into a deep pool beyond the woodland edge overhung with an egg-shaped timber pod suspended from a rusted steel arm. From here the water is channelled down the garden in a sinuous stream, through an open meadow intermingled with perennials, grasses and annuals that in early autumn provide splashes of colour from echinacea, asters, dahlias, heleniums and rudbeckias. Grasses such as *Molinia* and *Miscanthus*, in shades of buff and orange, create a harmonious, relaxed feel enhanced by the shaggy profile of pollarded willows.

Hard landscaping is deliberately minimal, with an informal pathway of flat Mendip stones that hug the course of the stream, providing the route up the garden to the timber pod, which offers an elevated view across the whole plot. Charred logs, creating randomised, upright patterns through the garden, represent the importance of soil health in an organic garden – the biochar from felled ash trees is used at Yeo Valley to improve the soil.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

1 The hanging pod, made from slats of steam-bent oak by furniture designer Tom Raffield (tomraffield.com), creates a refuge from which two people can watch the wildlife in the pool below, through the glass bottom of the pod. Using a chain winch, the pod can be pulled up so that it is suspended 1.8m above the water. Gaps of 1.5m between the tapered slats allow views out across the garden.

2 The rusted steel water trough, made by Surrey Ironcraft (surreyironcraft.com), brings an industrial element to the design. It also creates a reflective surface, and an opportunity to create sound in the garden as the water is channelled through a spout and falls into the pool below.

3 *Dahlia merckii*, with its dainty, lilac-pink flowers on airy stems, is dotted through the meadow. Originating in Mexico, it is fairly hardy in the UK and combines well in naturalistic planting schemes.

4 Quince (*Cydonia oblonga*) and medlar (*Mespilus germanica*) are used as woodland-edge trees that offer beautiful blossom in early summer and interesting fruits well into autumn.



Trailfinders' 50th Anniversary Garden



PROFILE

Designer Jonathan Snow

Chelsea history 2018 (Silver Gilt), 2019 (Silver)

Plot MA326

Sponsor Trailfinders

Contractor Stewart Landscape Construction

Theme A stylised representation of the landscape, plants and culture of the Himalayan foothills

Contact 020 7371 9475, jonathansnowdesign.co.uk

Jonathan Snow's plant-hunting trips to Nepal have informed the design of this 22m x 10m garden, which features the plants that occur naturally in the temperate zone of the Himalayas, at between 2,000m and 4,000m above sea level. He recreates the experience of climbing through temperate forests on stony tracks, to the background sounds of tumbling water, and pausing to rest on a stone ledge or trekking on to a timber shelter further up the foothills. This is a garden that reveals itself in a series of moments, thanks to the sinuous path that winds up through the naturalistic planting to the sturdy shelter built in the style of the region's religious buildings. The path is criss-crossed with man-made rills that draw the frequent floodwaters away from the main route through the hills and into the natural stream that tumbles down from the more densely forested slopes at the back, creating a watery counterpoint to the path. Slabs of sandstone form small bridges across the stream, allowing close-up access to the planting, a mixture of shrubs and perennials that thrive in the moist, mainly acidic conditions of the Himalayas.

Pinus wallichiana and *Cedrus deodara*, with a smattering of *Betula utilis* trees, form the canopy layer. In the openings, familiar shrubs such as hydrangeas and rhododendrons are combined with more exotic-looking species such as *Schefflera*, while large-leaved perennials, such as rodgersias and rheums, add to the exotic feel. Late-summer flowering plants including actaeas, persicarias, thalictrums and aconitums add tones of white, blue and purple to the garden.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

1 The **stone path** is made from pieces of limestone laid on end by Richard Clegg of RLC Dry-Stone Walling (richardclegg.co.uk) to represent the hand-made paths that connect villages in the Himalayan foothills. The same stone is used to make the seating ledge inspired by the Nepalese rest stops (*chautari*).

2 Taking his cue from Nepalese villagers, Jonathan has cut a **rill** into the slope behind the shelter, and alongside and across the path, to divert excess rainwater.

3 ***Brugmansia suaveolens***, although native to Brazil, has naturalised in the Himalayas and lends an exotic look to the planting. In the UK it produces its fragrant flowers from summer into autumn and needs a sheltered, frost-free spot.

4 ***Rosa sericea* subsp. *omeiensis* f. *pteracantha*** has jewel-red thorns, copes well in shade and usually holds its four-petalled, white flowers into autumn, when it produces shiny, red hips.

5 ***Strobilanthes wallichii*** adds spikes of purplish-blue flowers to autumn planting schemes. It needs partial shade and well-drained soil.



60° East - A Garden Between Continents



PROFILE

Designers Ekaterina Zasukhina
with Carly Kershaw

Chelsea history Debut

Plot RGB1

Sponsors Bodmin Jail,
Bodmin Jail Hotel

Contractor Cube 1994

Theme An evocation of
the Ural Mountain landscapes
and a call for our collective
need to look after the Earth

Contact Elena Zasukhina
+7 912 243 46 99, uralgarden.com;
Carly Kershaw
01962 711600, heduk.com

Occupying the Rock Garden Bank site at the bottom of Main Avenue, the Bodmin Jail garden is a reinterpretation of one designed by Ekaterina Zasukhina in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg in the Urals – the meeting point of Europe and Asia. Inspired by the area's beauty, the garden draws on the planting palettes of the East and the West to create a colourful and uplifting journey into the Ural Mountains.

A gravel path leads through a mix of long-flowering perennials, including geraniums, sanguisorbas, salvias and *Alchemilla mollis*, around rocks and up rugged steps made from dark-green Ural quartzite. On one side a stream tumbles down the slope and on the other a patch of meadow is revealed beneath a multi-stemmed *Malus* and an *Acer tataricum* subsp. *ginnala*. The path bends, enabling a closer view of a striking sculpture of two figures in rusted steel by Penny Hardy and a cloud-pruned *Pinus mugo* overhanging the water, creating a naturalistic, windswept effect.

A group of pines suggests the forested slopes where the source of the babbling water is revealed in a dramatic waterfall that cascades down the rockface constructed from a cluster of Ural rocks, some more than 2.5m high, into a pool. Here a stone bridge allows the journey to continue past a majestic weeping willow and alongside a larger pool where water lilies bloom in the calmer parts. The journey back down the garden is via more stone steps, past drifts of streamside flowers such as *Lythrum salicaria* 'Swirl', *Veronica beccabunga* and *Myosotis scorpioides*.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

1 The two sculptures by Penny Hardy (pennyhardysculpture.com) incorporate pieces of metal from machine parts in the Urals, where mining is widespread. The seated child facing the kissing couple reflects the theme of conserving the land for future generations.

2 *Pinus mugo* is used in two forms in the garden. In its natural form, it anchors the planting and sits well in the rocky landscape. Cloud-pruned specimens create eye-catching forms, one at each corner at the front of the garden, and one in the centre, leaning over the main pool.

3 Camomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*), an ancient medicinal plant and the national flower of Russia, softens the edge of the stone path on the ascent to the waterfall.

4 *Geranium* 'Blue Cloud' is a tall, long-flowering cultivar with pale-blue flowers and purple veining. It makes an excellent filler in borders.

5 Umbellifers are used throughout the garden, with *Orlaya grandiflora* providing a more showy form at the front and *Ammi majus*, planted in drifts with ferns towards the back, creating a soft, meadowy feel.



Guangzhou Garden: Guangzhou China



PROFILE

Designers Peter Chmiel with
Chin-Jung Chen

Chelsea history Debut

Plot MA324

Sponsor The Administration
of Forestry and Gardening of
Guangzhou Municipality

Contractor The Outdoor Room

Theme How future cities can
balance the needs of people and
wildlife and be resilient to the
effects of climate change

Contact 01225 332664,
grant-associates.uk.com

The Chinese city of Guangzhou, with its environmental approach to city planning, is the inspiration for this garden designed by landscape architects Peter Chmiel and Chin-Jung Chen of Grant Associates. Drawing on Guangzhou's three distinctive landscape zones, the garden layout is an undulating form that starts, at the back, with a rockscape where a green wall and trees, such as Scots pine, river birch and field maple, clean the city air. Water emerges here, and from the latticework boundary fence, to flow across the garden in an organically shaped pool punctuated with grassy islands. The largest of these forms the main social space where a soaring lattice tower, made from laminated bamboo, provides a place for gathering and sitting.

The woodland-edge landscape bordering the wetlands is dominated by two mature dawn redwoods (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) underplanted with ferns, *Carex* sedges, hostas and the creamy white spires of *Actaea racemosa*. The changes in the planting palette to make the most of the new September show date have enabled the designers to include a large number of water lilies, which they hope will be in full bloom, including late-flowering *Nymphaea* 'Darwin' and *N.* 'Colorado'. Marginals include the exotic-looking *Equisetum hyemale*, *Cyperus involucratus* and sparkling *Isolepis cernua*. Stepping-stone bridges link a number of elegant, geodesic structures ranging from 8.5m to 2.5m high and providing spaces for both people (they include the central tower with seats, a smaller tower fitted with a swing for children, and a bird hide) and wildlife.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

1 The **Active Air Green Wall** by Biotope (biotope.uk.com), a lush mix of ferns, ivy, *Carex morrowii* 'Irish Green' and *Heuchera* 'Green Spire', is an example of using technology alongside nature to improve city environments. Polluted air is cleaned by the roots and recirculated. Here it is expelled into the main tower to provide fresh air for those inside, and into the nearby water to help with oxygenation.

2 *Phyllostachys edulis*, the bamboo used by MOSO (moso-bamboo.com) to make the laminated, geodesic structures designed and fabricated by Xylotek (xylotek.co.uk), is a strong, fast-growing plant native to China. Some 20-25 per cent of the poles can be cut annually without reducing the size of a plantation, making it very suitable for reforestation.

3 **Floating plants** such as *Nymphaea* 'Colorado', which holds its salmon-pink flowers 7-10cm above the surface, help to keep the water cool by shading.

4 The deciduous conifer *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, only known as a fossil until 1941, is now regularly used in planting schemes to help remove air pollution.



The Boodles Secret Garden

Designer Thomas Hoblyn
Category Sanctuary
Plot MA337
Sponsor Boodles
Contractor The Garden Builders
Contact 01359 252056,
 thomashoblyn.com

Inspired by the classic children's book *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett and the jewellery collection of the same name by sponsor Boodles, Tom uses a louvred oak screen, designed and crafted by Jan Hendzel, to suggest the high walls of the enchanted garden. A tangle of grasses and perennials, mainly in greens and creams, creates the wilder landscape on the perimeter. Inside, the planting erupts beneath a canopy of tree fern fronds, with jewel-like, pendent flowers such as *Acis autumnalis* and *Fuchsia magellanica* var. *molinae*, and the exotic-looking bells of *Dahlia campanulata*. A bench carved from London plane sits at the heart of the sanctuary.



Bible Society: The Psalm 23 Garden

Designer Sarah Eberle
Category Sanctuary
Plot RHW287
Sponsor Bible Society
Contractor Landform Consultants
Contact 07825 448620, saraheberle.com

Inspired by Dartmoor's landscape, this is a composition of four elements: water, rock, trees and planting. A glass wall contains the pool at the front, representing the 'still waters' that are mentioned in the second line of Psalm 23. A stepping stone of weathered granite invites the viewer into the garden where a flattened rock and a cantilevered rock beneath a hawthorn tree offer places to rest, soothed by the sound of water. Naturalistic planting of wildflowers grasses, ferns and low shrubs, including moorland species, such as *Vaccinium myrtillus*, and autumn-flowering perennials, such as *Eurybia divaricata* and *Eupatorium maculatum*, softens the pillows of granite framing the garden.



Finding Our Way: An NHS Tribute Garden

Designer Naomi Ferrett-Cohen
Category Sanctuary
Plot RHW286
Sponsor University of Oxford and Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Contractor Burnham Landscaping
Contact 01273 381512,
 naomiferrettcohen.com

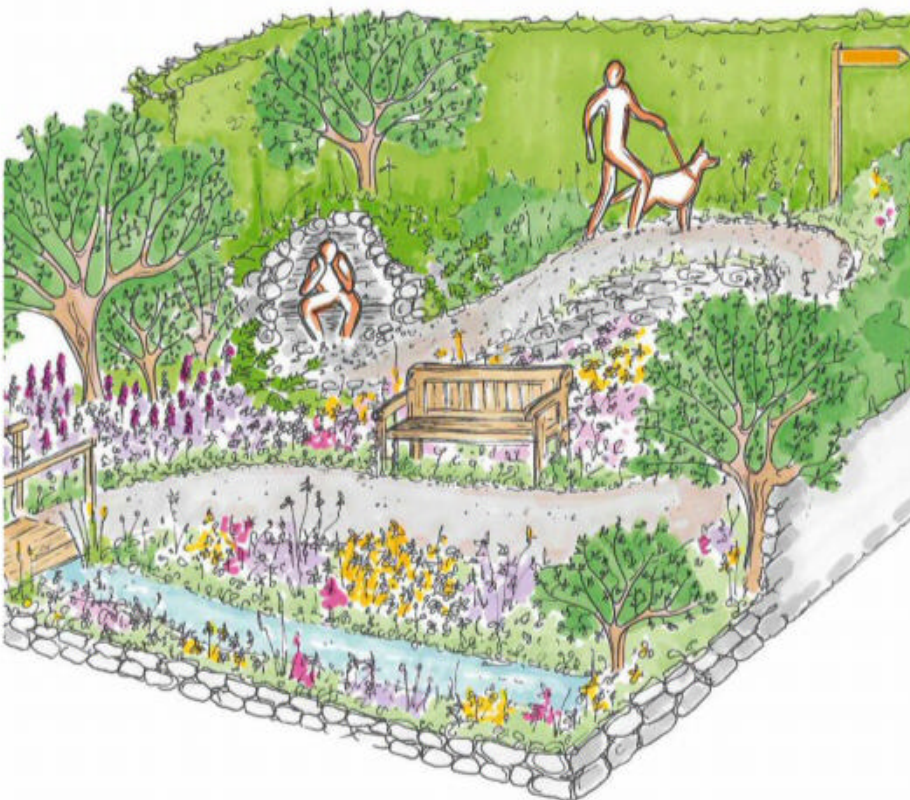
Water is used cleverly to represent the teamwork required to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. It spills down the sides of the bent-oak entrance arches, into raised, rectangular pools and down through the garden in rills that widen into a series of circular pools, dropping to ground level where the rills converge in a large pool. A York stone bench provides a place for reflection among prairie-style planting that mixes perennials such as campanulas, asters and persicarias with grasses. Trees, including the rare *Pyrus cordata*, provide shade.



The Parsley Box Garden

Designer Alan Williams
Category Sanctuary
Plot RHW286
Sponsor Parsley Box
Contractor Landform Consultants
Contact 01753 628664, formplants.com

This is a new take on the traditional kitchen garden, with areas for cooking as well as for dining. The design uses a series of planters arranged at different heights to make the garden accessible to all generations. The planters alternate with ground planting, forming the informal boundary around the garden. A cantilevered pergola creates vertical structure and a framing device for the seating area. Fruit trees such as fig, espaliered conference pear and apple provide fruits for picking while the planters are filled with herbs, vegetables and edible flowers such as nasturtiums. Perennials in shades of mauve, orange and burgundy are woven among the edibles, while *Osmanthus* domes anchor the scheme.



Guide Dogs' 90th Anniversary Garden

Designers Adam Woolcott and Jonathan Smith
Category Artisan
Plot AR566
Sponsor The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association
Contractor Conway Landscapes
Contact 07967 632525, woolcottandsmith.com

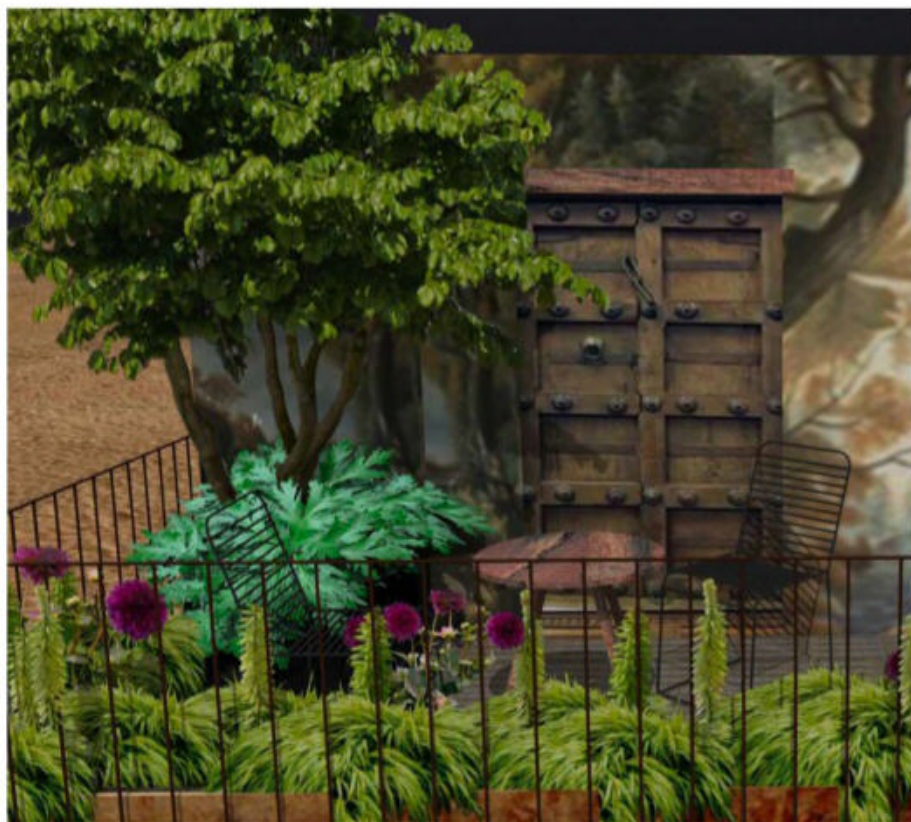
This garden celebrates 90 years of The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, which began with four veterans blinded in the First World War receiving a lifeline when they were partnered with a guide dog. It traces the journey from a place of isolation, depicted by a crouched metal figure under a copper beech, to a life of independence, shown by a figure striding along with his dog, to a stream flanked by wildflowers such as common mallow and autumn hawkbit and perennials such as *Aster x frikartii* 'Mönch' and *Helenium* 'Moerheim Beauty'.



The Blue Diamond Forge Garden

Designers Alan Roper with the Blue Diamond Group Team
Category Artisan
Plot AR565
Sponsor Blue Diamond Group
Contractor Conquest Creative Spaces
Contact 07911 716223, bluediamond.gg

Inspired by the National Trust's working 15th-century forge at Branscombe in Devon, this garden spreads around a thatched, stone forge where a blacksmith's equipment and tools can be seen through the open door. A stone wall protects the garden at the front while trees, mainly alder and birch, shelter the back and sides of the building. A stream runs round the perimeter, while inside the wall is a plunge pool, an essential element in the blacksmith's craft. A stepping stone over the stream leads into an area planted with wildflowers and cottage garden plants, including heleniums and crocosmias, that mimic the fiery tones of the forge's embers.



Balcony gardens

The designers of these five Balcony Gardens, on Royal Hospital Way, have filled their 5m wide x 2m deep spaces with a variety of different plants, at different heights. Many have found room for trees or shrubs that provide privacy, and for edible plants, grown at plucking height. **Nicola Hale's** Landform Balcony Garden shows how you can make your balcony a wildlife corridor by filling it with plants that attract pollinators, especially bees. **Martha Krempel's** Arcadia (shown) transports the owner, who reclines on a swinging daybed made from reclaimed hardwood, to an exotic place full of lush planting with a distant landscape painted on the house wall to complete the illusion. **James Smith's** Green Sky Pocket Garden shows how you can use green roof technology to plant up a balcony floor with a mix of evergreens and herbaceous plants and have space for multi-stemmed trees, wall planters filled with herbs and edibles, and a timber bench. The containers in **Alexandra Noble's** Balcony of Blooms form a continuous planted edge, maximising planting space, while **Michael Coley's** Sky Sanctuary is a shady, high-rise balcony, with planting in recycled plastic containers.



Houseplant studios

Move over the solitary, windowsill peace lily or money plant pot – the three exhibitors in this new category, on Ranelagh Gardens, are filling their mocked-up rooms with a dizzying array of houseplant options for different conditions and effects. The most immersive is The Green Room (shown), designed by **Ian Drummond** in collaboration with **Malvern Garden Buildings**. There's just space for a macramé swinging seat; the rest of the room is a jungle-like profusion of unusual indoor plants including vanda lilies in dark purple and acid green trailing from the ceiling, mistletoe cacti in plant hangers and tree-dwelling species such as *Medinilla magnifica* displayed on tree trunks. Trailing plants, attached to wooden poles, also feature in **Alice and Maddie Bailey's** FOREST, which shows how many houseplants grow naturally in the rainforest, and include epiphytic cacti, bromeliads, orchids and air plants. At ground level are shade-loving ferns, calatheas and creeping vines. Green Bathroom Retreat, by **Conservatory Archives**, is filled with tropical plants suitable for varying light conditions such as *Alocasia* and *Begonia* species, and the bathtub's even planted up with aquatic plants.



Container gardens

In many, often urban, situations, container gardens are the most practical way of growing plants. The designers in this new category have created miniature, themed show gardens in their 4m x 3m courtyards, with artefacts, murals, sculptures and water as well as an array of different containers. **Sara Edwards'** repurposed Intermediate Bulk Containers (normally used commercially for bulk substances) in The IBC Pocket Forest (shown) provide an affordable and eye-catching way of growing trees and large shrubs. **Ellie Edkins** has chosen corrugated steel for her industrial-look, curved planters and filled them with lush, green plants in her tranquil garden. **John McPherson** has raided his home and garden to create an eclectic, vibrant look in his Pop Street Garden, while **Mika Misawa** has used a mix of containers, boulders and gravel to create her minimalist space. The scallop-shaped containers made from recycled oak tree trunks in **Anna Dabrowska-Jaudi's** garden lend a sculptural element to the space. They are filled with flowers that create light and movement, such as *Oenothera lindheimeri* 'Whirling Butterflies' and *Verbena hastata* 'White Spires'.



THE RHS GARDENS

This year there are two RHS feature gardens on Main Avenue. The 20m x 20m RHS COP26 Garden, designed by Balston Agius, shows how gardens can be adapted to protect biodiversity and be more resilient in extreme climates. Divided into four sections, it can be viewed close up from all sides along a curving walkway of recycled scaffold boards. Lead designer Marie-Louise Agius reveals its messages

What are the changes gardeners need to make to protect the planet?

The garden is all about managing and mitigating the extremes of climate change through horticulture and design. For example, one way of handling storm events is to use raised planting in beds that are free draining. We must start from the ground up, and use ways of capturing and storing water more productively. We should also think about trying more resilient plants. Research shows that people don't like change and that the classic English garden is what they love to see, but our garden will show how you can achieve a romantic look by using plants that are tougher and hardier.

What are the best things to do if you only have a small garden?

Find out how to improve your soil to best support your planting, whether it's in a flowerbed or container. Regularly improving the soil with compost and organic matter can help to ensure that it has a greater capacity for absorbing rain, and a mulch will help to reduce evaporation in hot

weather and retain the moisture in the soil. Also, try to grow some plants that will support pollinators and other wildlife throughout the year. If you only have a windowbox, you can make it a wildlife corridor for bumblebees and other pollinators by your choice of plants. Our garden will show the yin and yang: the grey front garden, which is paved and pointed with mortar and forms an impermeable surface where water runs off and leads to flooding, versus the green one, where the paving has open joints to allow water to filter through, and the planting encourages wildlife.

Are there bomb-proof trees we should be planting now?

I'm not sure there is such a thing as a bomb-proof tree but there's a lot of research being undertaken as to which trees are more resistant to fluctuating seasons and extremes of heat and flooding, as well as to increasing numbers of pests and diseases. We're hoping to include examples of these trees in the garden, such as *Koelreuteria paniculata* and *Cladrastis kentukea*. □

MARIE-LOUISE AGIUS'S selection of resilient plants to try in your garden

Helleborus niger

Year-round interest from foliage, but particular winter interest from the flowers (January to March). Tolerant of heavy soils and has a high degree of resilience to stress in general.

Rosa rugosa

Tough, easy to grow, and can be used for hedging. Multi-seasonal with scented blooms and brightly coloured autumn hips. Will handle almost all soils, and is a great food source for wildlife and pollinators, as well as providing shelter and habitat.

Amelanchier x lamarckii

A beautiful, small, deciduous tree with multi-seasonal interest from spring blossom to autumn foliage and fruit. It can be pruned up to create sculptural, architectural, multi-stemmed specimens in a small garden. The nectar-rich flowers are also great for attracting pollinators.

Quercus ilex

A tough, long-lived tree that is fast-growing, resistant to salt spray and useful as a wind-break in coastal situations, allowing habitat to develop behind it. More resistant to pests and diseases than some of our native oaks; being of Mediterranean origin, it is well placed to adapt to the anticipated changing climatic conditions of the UK.

Ginkgo biloba

Having survived multiple mass-extinction events, this tree is a true survivor. It is long-lived, pollution-tolerant, low maintenance and generally pest- and disease-free. It is also simply stunning in the autumn with its buttery, golden-yellow colouring.

CRITICS' SHORTLIST

Ahead of the official judging we asked three top designers – including the winner of 2019's Best in Show – and a leading garden critic to pick out the gardens and trends they're most looking forward to at this year's show



Ula Maria

Award-winning garden designer and landscape architect.

Main gardens

My shortlist (favourite in green)

- + The M&G Garden
- + Trailfinders' 50th Anniversary Garden
- + The Yeo Valley Organic Garden

The designers of The M&G Garden, Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg of Harris Bugg Studio, are without a doubt among the most exciting young designers in the industry today. Their fresh and contemporary designs are infused with ideas of naturalism and sustainability, and delivered with precision and panache. Their take on an urban public space – designed as a shared, green sanctuary for both people and wildlife – is bound to deliver the inspiration we all crave in the trickiest of environments – our busy, noisy and restless cities.

Artisan/Sanctuary gardens

- + Finnish Soul Garden – A Nordic Heritage Seaside Garden
- + Bible Society: The Psalm 23 Garden

I'm excited by both of these gardens. The Psalm 23 Garden is enriched with details of Sarah Eberle's formative years in the Devon countryside, which inspired her to pursue a career in the landscape industry. Gardens informed by such strong personal links are bound to be very special. However, having spent many summers by the Baltic Sea, I am intrigued by the Finnish Soul Garden, which provides a glimpse of Baltic seaside vegetation and captures the serenity of the landscape without compromising the overall contemporary look and feel of the garden. This is cleverly highlighted through architecture – a modern sauna structure with a green roof.



CHARLIE HOPKINSON

Tim Richardson

Columnist, garden critic and leading garden thinker.

- + The M&G Garden
- + The Florence Nightingale Garden: A Celebration of Modern-Day Nursing
- + Bodmin Jail: 60°East – A Garden Between Continents

My guess is that The M&G Garden will win best in show, but The Florence Nightingale Garden will give Harris Bugg Studio a good run for their money. That is because Myers, of all the main show-garden designers, has opted for a design that gives him the freedom to explore a new palette of plants (for Chelsea) in a creative way. Large planting beds dominate the courtyard, which will include plants discovered in Florence Nightingale's own pressed-flower collection. There is a lighter touch to this design than in some of Myers' previous outings, so it's definitely one to watch.

- + Bible Society: The Psalm 23 Garden
- + The Blue Diamond Forge Garden
- + Finnish Soul Garden – A Nordic Heritage Seaside Garden
- + The Parsley Box Garden

The fearless and occasionally eccentric Sarah Eberle lights up the show with a garden that defies current trends. Psalm 23 is an intriguing premise for a garden, and Eberle takes it as far as it can go, channelling her inner anchorite to concoct a hermit-friendly garden of granite, water, thorn and hornbeam. Among the plants promised are *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *Drosera intermedia* and *Eriophorum angustifolium*. With its pared-down aesthetic, this probably won't win its category (The Parsley Box Garden, another original conception, is more likely to do that), but it will certainly conjure a memorable atmosphere.



Andy Sturgeon

Broadcaster, author and internationally renowned garden designer.

- + The M&G Garden
- + The Guangzhou Garden: Guangzhou China
- + The Florence Nightingale Garden: A Celebration of Modern-Day Nursing

Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg have individually proven themselves to be thoughtful, innovative designers who make gardens with clear identities and magical atmospheres. This is their first Chelsea outing as a duo, and will surely fit that mould and be refreshingly different. A sculpture by McMullan Studio, inspired by an industrial past, weaves through the garden to define a pocket park. Expect a masterful command of space and an unusual take on planting that avoids the 'commonplace'. Mighty trees are promised and the planting beneath is bound to throw up a few surprises.

- + The Boodles Secret Garden
- + Finding Our Way: An NHS Tribute Garden
- + Bible Society: The Psalm 23 Garden

Tom Hoblyn never disappoints at Chelsea. He refuses to be pigeonholed and over the years has produced an eclectic range of highly memorable gardens. An expert horticulturist, his skills and passion are always centre stage, and this year, soft, romantic planting provides the setting for an enchanting garden. Inspired by the children's book *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett, Tom has worked with craftsmen to make an elegant, almost ethereal, 'wall' to loosely contain the heart of the space. This unusual sculpture works harmoniously with the planting within and will deliver some wonderfully enticing views for visitors.



SAM FROST

Matt Keightley

Writer and designer with a focus on the role of gardens in wellbeing.

- + The M&G Garden
- + The Guangzhou Garden: Guangzhou China
- + The Florence Nightingale Garden: A Celebration of Modern-Day Nursing

Charlotte Harris and Hugo Bugg are incredibly talented designers and individuals; combine their minds and that talent and we are sure to see something extraordinary in The M&G Garden. Don't be fooled by the simple notion of a requirement for better urban greenery. This will be a garden to open the eyes of the public and excite those seeking truly original inspiration, and will undoubtedly be delivered to world-class standards. Year after year, no matter how ambitious the endeavour, the powerhouse Crocus executes in unwavering and impeccable fashion.

- + Bible Society: The Psalm 23 Garden
- + Finnish Soul Garden – A Nordic Heritage Seaside Garden
- + The Blue Diamond Forge Garden

When you have one of the most experienced Chelsea veterans, Sarah Eberle, at the reins, you can be sure to see something carefully considered, immaculate and exciting. The Psalm 23 Garden comes with a strong message in the form of hope, encouragement and solace, which could not be more relevant after 18 months of a pandemic. It is sure to draw crowds, with mesmerising water movement adding welcome animation to a sanctuary garden. Cleverly placed trees will frame views into the naturalistic landscape, pulling visitors into the garden, subtly encouraging and reinforcing the importance of connecting with nature.

One to watch

The Yeo Valley Organic Garden

It is always exciting to see young talent on the Main Avenue of the show. This year, Tom Massey is returning to Chelsea with an exciting design inspired by Yeo Valley Organic Garden, which places wildlife, biodiversity and sustainability at its core. A stream runs through the garden, seamlessly connecting different areas and habitats, from open perennial meadow to productive woodland. The design showcases Tom's ability to capture the beauty of the countryside with a touch of wild planting and interpret it in a way that is new and imaginative. Suspended above the water is an egg-shaped, steam-bent oak hide, which adds a contemporary twist to the naturalistic setting. If this garden is a measure of today's young talent, the future is bright for Chelsea's Main Avenue.

The indisputable star of this year's Chelsea is the **season**. For the first and perhaps only time nurseries and show-garden designers have the chance to play with a completely different palette of plants at our premier show. While this year's show is still a little early for celebrating the 'fifth season' (that period from late summer into autumn when all those grasses and perennial plants we know so well come into their own), there is still an opportunity to enjoy a richer, darker, chromatic range of colour than the usual show date of early spring generally allows. Designers will have an opportunity to work with plant combinations that more accurately reflect their own style, since fewer gardens nowadays are made with a May-June highlight in mind. Let's hope their displays provide some much-needed beauty and joy.

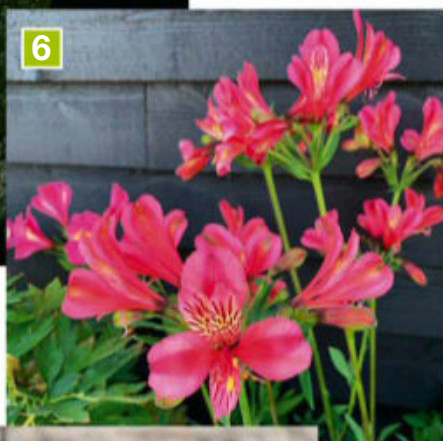
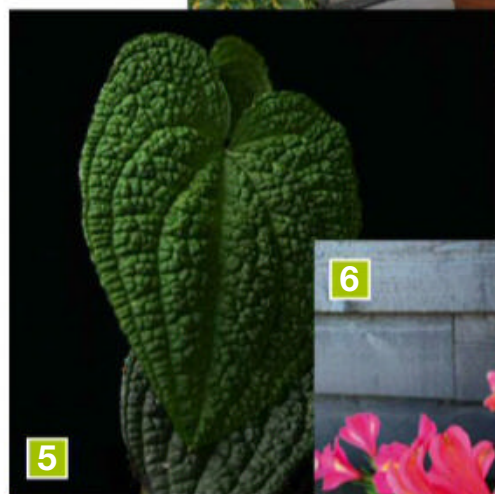
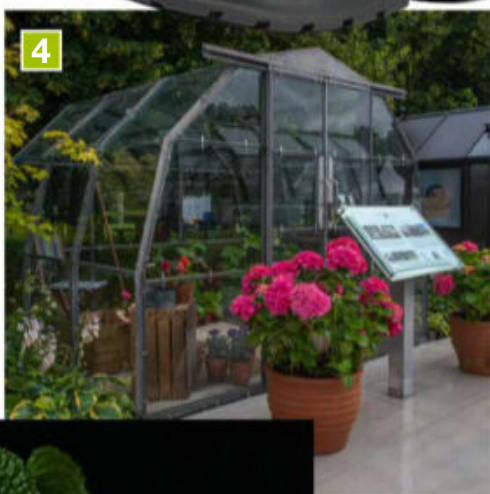
Chelsea usually rides in on the coat tails of spring with everything bursting into life as the days lengthen. But here we are at the other end of the season, witnessing flowers fading and the slow descent into winter. Designers haven't had time to properly plan for this, so will be unable to exploit all the opportunities **September** provides, but as they scramble to avoid the temptation of the clichéd New Perennial, expect to see plants and combinations that will make you go weak at the knees. The growers are in uncharted territory here so serendipity will play a bigger role than usual, but watch out for annuals you've never seen, beautiful seedheads, grasses that are actually in flower, late-summer bulbs, even perhaps 'dead' things, and undoubtedly dahlias to die for.

While show and feature gardens tend to draw a lot of attention, there is always fierce competition among the trade stands, the standard of which seems to improve every year. It's no wonder, given that entrants carefully select a designer to create a backdrop to showcase their products, rather than accessorising their stand with a few pots. This year, outdoor furniture maker Gaze Burvill has teamed up with **Ann-Marie Powell** to create a display that reflects our need for places in which to relax and reconnect with nature, and the importance of the provenance of materials (the more local the better). The stands aren't judged with quite the same rigour as the show gardens, which may contribute to their effectiveness. It gives designers the chance to relax and explore design in a more spontaneous and enjoyable way.



AROUND THE SHOW AT CHELSEA 2021

Alongside the show gardens, RHS Chelsea Flower Show is renowned for its unparalleled plant displays in the Great Pavilion and its exciting garden accessory exhibits, many launching new products. Here are a few highlights



Somerset-based, edible plant specialist **Pennard Plants (1)** is teaming up with seed producer Burpee Europe to pay tribute to the humble tomato. This unique display, based around the forthcoming book *Ten Tomatoes That Changed The World* by William Alexander, celebrates the fruit's history, beauty and practical uses. Stand **GPB150**. pennardplants.com

Surreal Succulents (2) will launch x *Semponium* 'Sienna' at this year's show. Bred by Daniel Michael, this intergeneric hybrid is the world's first official cross between *Sempervivum* and *Aeonium*. The fast-growing succulent grows in a conical shape and boasts an array of beautiful reds in the spring, and is all the more attractive in being easy to grow in a variety of locations – gravel garden, patio or windowsill – in free-draining, peat-free soil. Stand **GPE235**. surrealsucculents.co.uk

Leading garden designer Ann-Marie Powell has designed a display for outdoor furniture designer **Gaze Burvill** around the themes of wellbeing and tranquillity, to highlight the importance of our relationship with nature and the need for sustainable, locally sourced materials. The garden comprises two areas: Hampshire Wild, inspired by the woodlands of southeast England, evokes a quiet space for reflection, while Rural Refined captures the pleasure of outdoor entertaining and features Gaze Burvill's new Curved Splash Lounge. Tapping into the autumnal season, coloured cushions will complement Ann-Marie's stunning planting. Stand **MA331**. gazeburvill.com

Another garden-focused stand will be Muck's Allotment wellbeing garden, which focuses on the therapeutic benefits of gardening. This collaboration between the **Original Muck Boot Company (3)** and Kirsty Ward – better known on Instagram as *my_little_allotment* – will feature upcycled sculptures, seating made from recycled wood and lots of bee-friendly planting, and is designed to demonstrate the therapeutic effects of gardening. There's also a chance to catch a glimpse of the Muck Boot's new, light-duty Duck Lace Leather boots. Stand **AR516**. muckbootcompany.co.uk

Glasshouse manufacturer **Hartley Botanic (4)** will host a stand showcasing more than 80 years of trading. Four beautiful, handmade structures will represent a different era, each dressed with plants and accessories to reflect the relevant decade.

Alitex will also appear, promoting a theme of reduce, reuse and recycle with a display of two sustainable greenhouses and gardens: The Scotney, which demonstrates the possibilities for growing your own, and The Ickworth, featuring luxurious, re-loved accessories by Lamb & Newt. Find **Hartley Botanic** at stand **SR33**, hartleybotanic.co.uk; **Alitex** at **MA334**, alitex.co.uk

At its debut in the Great Pavilion, **Grow Tropicals (5)** will unveil a giant terrarium, showcasing a variety of South American plant species. Expect to find aroids, such as *Anthurium clidemioides* with its deeply textured leaves, and some rarer examples not previously seen at Chelsea. These unusual specimens reflect the growing interest and trend in houseplants and indoor gardening. Stand **GPF214**. growtropicals.com

Making the most of an autumn Chelsea, **Parigo Horticultural (6)** will exhibit a wide range of alstroemerias at the peak of their flowering season (June to October), showcasing the stunning colour range of this beautiful, repeat-flowering plant. Stand **GPE228**. parigo.co.uk

Ocean Plastic Pots (7) has been chosen as the winner of the RHS's inaugural Sustainable Garden Product of the Year award. Mindful of the vast amount of plastic in our seas, and its detrimental effect on marine life, the company makes plant pots from discarded fishing nets and recycled rope, offering a sustainable solution to over-reliance on non-biodegradable products. Stand **EA447**. oceanplasticpots.com

The Parlsey Box Garden, designed by Alan Williams, is to feature two new pieces by sculptor **Simon Gudgeon**. The sweeping, bronze sculptures, titled *Amorous*, stand at 85cm high and embody a reverse heart design. The aim is to challenge stereotypes around ageing, and to portray the power of sculpture and the beauty it offers in a garden. Plot **RHW286**. simongudgeon.com □



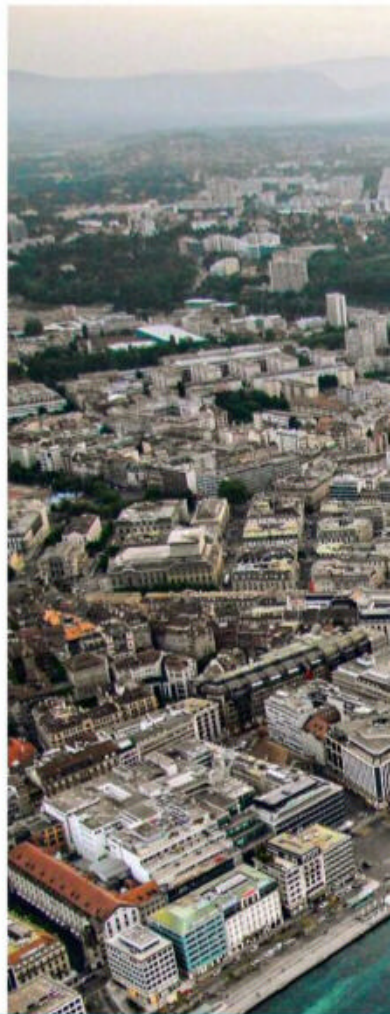
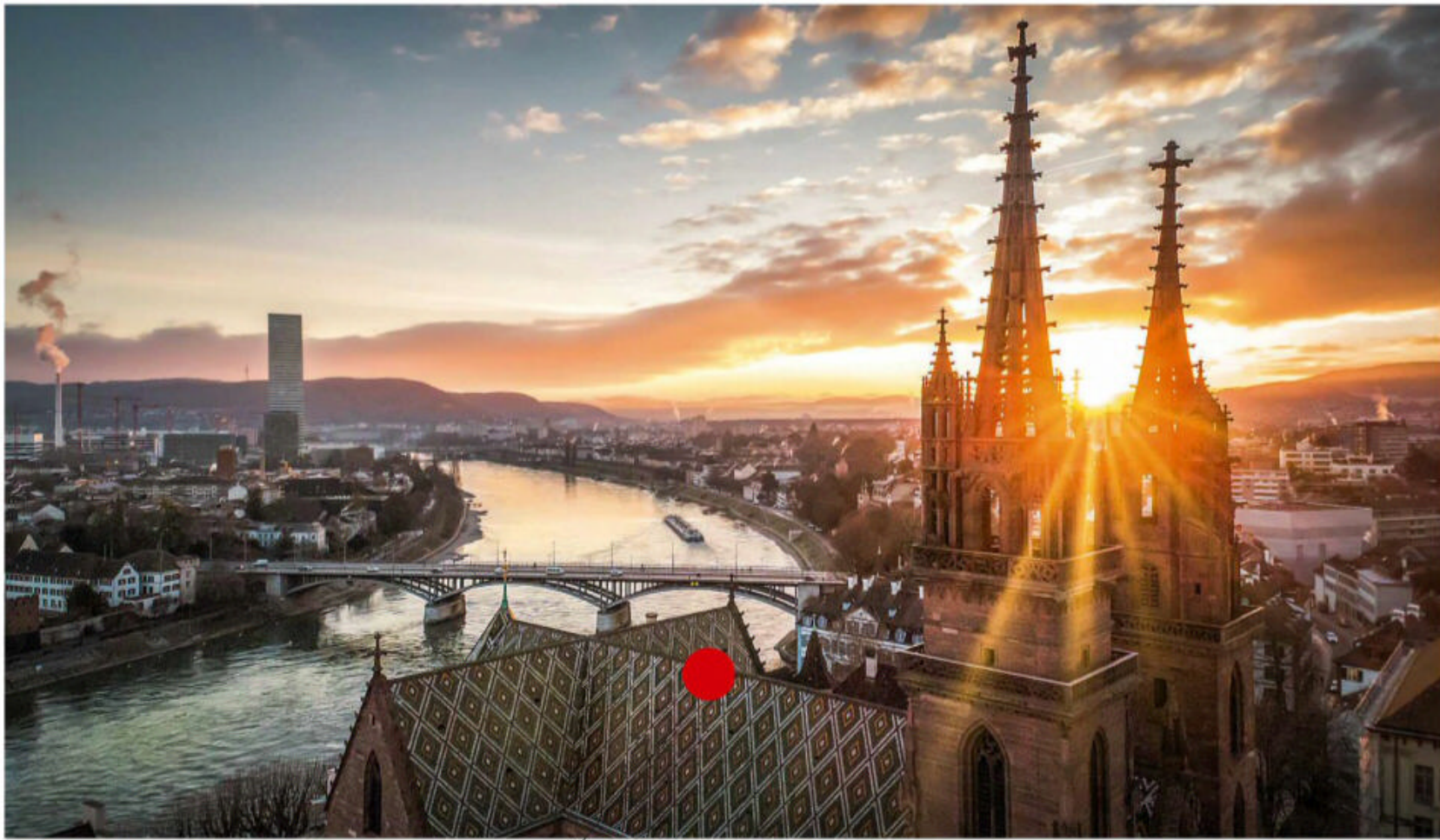
Grüezi! Bonjour! Buongiorno! Allegra!

Located in the heart of Europe, Switzerland is renowned for its pristine nature and its spectacular variety of plants and flowers, from the alpine meadows of the Bernese Oberland to the mountain herb gardens of the Lake Geneva Region and the Mediterranean parks of Ticino, or indeed the many gardens and parks within our cities. Put simply, you're never far from nature in Switzerland. And thanks to our world-class, convenient and fully integrated public transport system, which of course runs like (Swiss) clockwork, this compact country can be criss-crossed with ease and in great comfort. Furthermore, due to its geographical location and climate, nature in Switzerland is pleasingly seasonal, making it a destination to be enjoyed year-round.

Switzerland has a long tradition of welcoming guests from the UK and Ireland to observe and enjoy the natural landscape. Indeed, it was the sheer beauty of this Swiss natural landscape that lured many a British visitor to such places as the Bernese Oberland in the early 19th century. Through careful stewardship of our natural landscape, Switzerland is now recognised as a leading sustainable travel destination. A sustainable approach to welcoming and hosting visitors is part of our national DNA – we recognise our responsibility and role as guardians of our natural environment for future generations.

At next year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show you will have the chance to get a taste of what makes Switzerland such a special place when award-winning garden designer Lilly Gomm presents her Swiss Sanctuary Show Garden. Sponsored by Switzerland Tourism, the garden will showcase the many hidden gems and delights of Swiss flora and fauna, and highlight Switzerland's commitment to sustainability. But if you can't wait until May next year, why not come and experience for yourself the landscapes, the rich culture and most importantly the flora that has inspired Lilly's garden. Over the next five pages we offer a glimpse of just ten of our green cities – all just a stone's throw away from mountain trails, beautiful lakes, castles and vineyards. We also make a few suggestions of what to see and do, and where to stay, but there are many more at MySwitzerland.com/GI – and on page 120 you'll find details of how to win a trip to Switzerland. We look forward to welcoming you soon.





OUR GREEN CITIES

Come to Switzerland and prepare to be impressed: from its uniquely characterful cities offering local gastronomy, culture and stunning architecture, to a wealth of natural and historic highlights, this beautiful country offers you the warmest of welcomes, whether at a gracious hotel set in acres of parkland gardens or a charming guesthouse nestling in the rolling Swiss countryside. A city break is the best of both worlds, as not only can you enjoy all the urban environment has to offer, you're also never far from nature – and with enchanting snow-capped mountains and glistening lakes tempting you to explore further, and with excellent, sustainable public transport links, it couldn't be easier to get around.

Basel

Hugging the banks of the Rhine, cultural Basel is stylish and relaxed – a picturesque setting for Switzerland's oldest university city which also boasts around 40 museums and galleries, as well as botanical gardens and parks. From international exhibitions to street art, there's always something to admire in this vibrant city. Take a cruise along the Rhine to see local architecture at its best or rest a while at one of Basel's riverside *buvette* café-bars. Stay at **Hotel Krafft** in the Kleinbasel, the historic Old Town; built in 1873, this characterful hotel combines classic and contemporary décor and a beautiful garden on the banks of the Rhine. Sample local flavours such as the Ueli craft beer or dine on the terrace at the historic **Grand Hotel Les Trois Rois** with its very own flower shop just round the corner.



Bern

Against an Alpine backdrop, Switzerland's capital sits like a medieval jewel on the river Aare, its charming Old Town a UNESCO World Heritage site with burnished rooftops, sandstone terraces, Renaissance fountains, six kilometres of historic covered arcades and a magnificent cathedral. A city made for exploring on foot, head to the **Rose Garden** above the **Bear Park** or the viewing platform of the cathedral for the best views of the Old Town. Sample modern local fare at **Restaurant Bay** on the banks of the Aare, or at **Caffè Bar Sattler** in the heart of the city. Get out of the city with an e-bike tour on the 59km **Grünes Band** (Green Belt) route and escape to the nearby Emmental valley to wind down at **Hotel Bären Dürrenroth**, just 30km away with its romantic rose garden and Gault Millau-accredited restaurant.



Geneva

Geneva sits at the southernmost tip of the stunning lake that bears its name. The capital of peace and home to the Red Cross and the European UN, it is also the base for many international companies, although you'll find a slower pace at the **Geneva Watchmaking School**, an artisan centre of horological excellence. Geneva's Old Town is one of Europe's largest, dotted with galleries, antique shops, museums and fountains, while nearby **Carouge** is well worth a visit, with its Italianate architecture and Latin charm. In town, dine at **Max Brasserie** and spend a few hours relaxing at the lakeside lido of **Bains des Pâquis**, a few metres from the impressive **Jet d'Eau** water fountain, while luxurious **La Réserve Geneva**, set in acres of lush parkland with magnificent views over Lake Geneva, offers a relaxing base for your stay.



Locarno

Oozing with Mediterranean charm, Locarno in Italian-speaking Ticino Canton is Switzerland's warmest city, blessed with more than 2,300 hours of sunshine every year. On the shores of **Lake Maggiore**, this charming resort town is a feast for the eyes with breathtaking views in abundance, from palm-fringed lakeside walkways to the heights of **Madonna del Sasso** and beyond. Take a day trip to unspoilt **Valle Verzasca** – Ticino's green heart – or stay a while in arcaded **Piazza Grande**, Locarno's central hub. Here you can sample local fare at **Ristorante Fiorentina**, or fuel up before a day out in the mountains at **Al Porto Café Lago** with its lakeside balcony, right by the cog railway station. Stay at **Albergo Monte Verità** above Ascona, set in seven acres of peaceful parkland, while mid-18th century **Palazzo Gamboni** in nearby Onsernone valley also offers an idyllic escape.



Lausanne

Draped across three hills above the pristine waters of Lake Geneva and close to Lavaux and its terraced vineyards, the Olympic capital of Lausanne is an ideal base for exploring the delights of the lakeside as well as the nearby Alps. The medieval Old Town with its early Gothic cathedral is largely car-free and invites you to explore its delightful cafés, boutiques and museums at a slower pace, or enjoy a glass of local Chasselas wine at **Les Arches** bar or a leisurely bistro-style lunch at **Eat Me**. Getting down the slopes to the shoreline area of Ouchy is a breeze thanks to Switzerland's only Metro service, and here the mild microclimate of the lake ensures a profusion of vibrant Mediterranean flora along the lakeside promenades. A stay at the elegant **Beau-Rivage Palace** in its extensive private gardens on the shore will round off an unforgettable experience.



Lucerne

Picture-perfect Lucerne sits like a jewel on the shoreline of dramatic **Lake Lucerne** – with the buzz of an urban city, the lure of craggy mountains and peaceful lakeside beaches are also within easy reach. Charming **Hotel Wilden Mann** is an ideal base for your stay, with old-world charm and eclectic décor in every cosy nook and cranny. Take a dip at the city's Lido, try a spot of Swedish *fika* at **Café Nord** in town, or enjoy a *Kafi Lutz* (coffee with a shot) after dinner in the retro ambiance of **Luz Seebistro** on Bahnhofplatz by the lake. Further afield, a day out to explore nearby Rigi mountain on the new **William Tell walking trail** ends with a picturesque cog railway journey descent to pretty **Vitznau** from where the ferry glides serenely across the crystal waters to Lucerne.



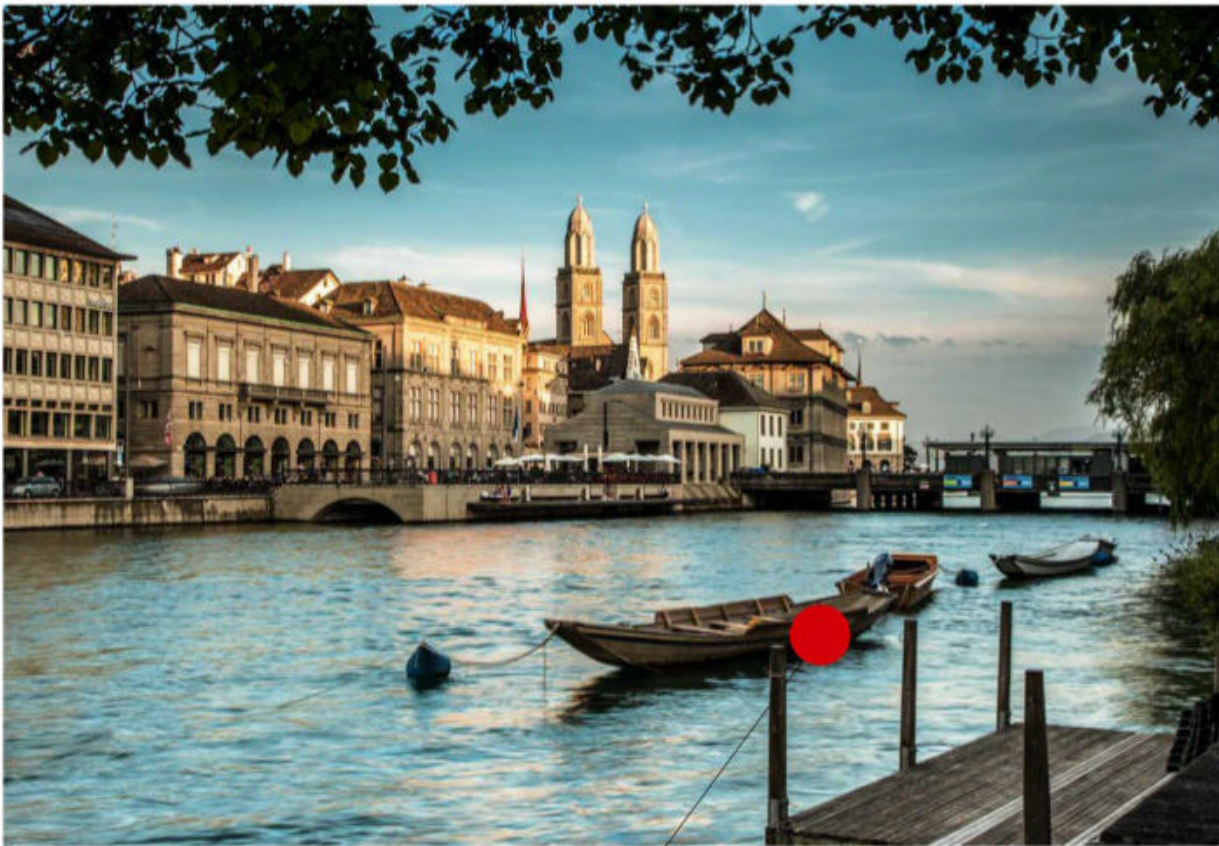
Lugano

Known as the gourmet Mecca of the south, Lugano sits in a bay on **Lake Lugano**. A city of parks and flowers, stately villas and elegant churches, it has a balmy climate year-round and a distinctly Mediterranean ambience. With an abundance of local delicacies on offer on market day, try fresh Alpine cheeses, salamis and Swiss olive oil, unique to this area. Take a stroll along the **Olive Path** to see the olive groves at **Gandria** or enjoy mountain excursions to **Monte Brè** or **Monte San Salvatore**. In town, sip a glass of local Merlot at **Bar Pinard** or feast at **Ristorante Orologio Lugano**, an institution in the city since 1907, and for a restful perspective of Lugano and its environs, stay at the 200-year-old **Villa Carona** set in lush mature gardens just a ten-minute drive out of town. Historic **Kurhaus Cademario Hotel** with three hectares of verdant parkland is also nearby.



St Gallen

The eastern university city of St Gallen was famed for its hand embroidery, earning much wealth and renown in medieval times. This strong streak of creativity lives on with its close connection to the arts. Several city museums, such as the **Kunstmuseum**, are dedicated to contemporary and modern art, and you will find many creative art installations in public places. Don't miss the binary train station clock, created by St Gallen artist and improvisational musician Norbert Möslang, for example. The attractive car-free Old Town is home to St Gallen's Baroque cathedral and historic **Abbey Library of Saint Gall** and you can sample a traditional Swiss fondue at **Restaurant Dreilinden** or a *Wiener-Schnitzel* at **Kafi Franz**. The city offers an excellent base for excursions into the uplands of **Appenzellerland** and **Lake Constance** where historic **Schlosshotel Wartegg**, complete with its extensive herb and kitchen garden and verdant English landscaping, awaits to cosset the weary traveller.



Zurich

Lively and avant-garde, Switzerland's largest city has a beautiful medieval Old Town right at its heart. Ramble through the narrow lanes to discover the city's fascinating past with the help of the handy **Zurich Guide** app which also serves as a city travel pass. Don't miss its two prominent churches: the **Fraumünster**, with its stained glass windows by Giacometti and Chagall, and the **Grossmünster**, with its iconic double towers. The newly extended **Kunsthaus Zürich** is a modern art aficionado's dream, alongside other museums showcasing design excellence, Swiss national culture and FIFA World Football. Sample locally made Turicum Gin, grab a coffee at the **Rooftop Bar** on the top floor of the **Modissa** fashion store overlooking buzzy Bahnhofstrasse, or dine at stylish **Gamper** for a taste of modern Swiss cuisine. To complete your city experience, stay at the five-star **Baur au Lac**, an elegant 19th-century family-run hotel with not one but two excellent restaurants.

Winterthur

Not far from Zurich is Winterthur, a bike-friendly city and a real family destination. Explore the narrow streets and alleyways, secluded courtyards and squares of its car-free **Old Town** and take in a cultural highlight or two. The choice is yours with 17 city museums and galleries, including the new **Swiss Science Center Technorama**. For a welcome caffeine break, head to **Portier**, a bijou coffee house in a former port's lodge near the railway station and for evening entertainment and an excellent meal **Restaurant Fredi** is the place to go – the comedy club on the same premises is also owned by Fredi's family. When it's time to recharge your batteries, head a mere 20 minutes away from Winterthur for a rural getaway in charming 17th-century **Gasthof Gyrenbad**.



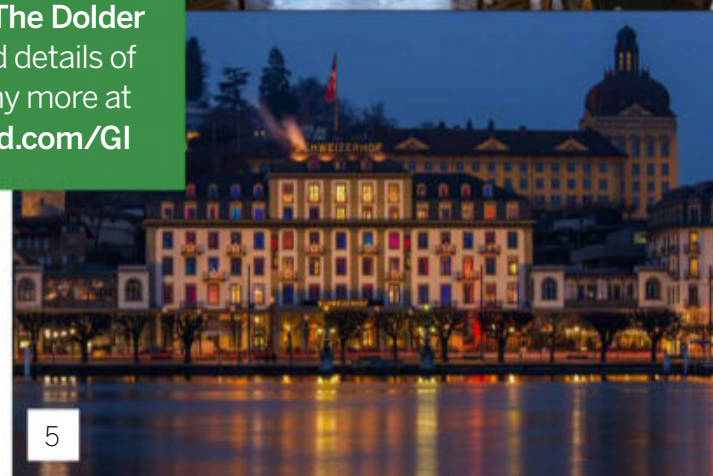
Swisstainable

Blessed with an abundance of natural beauty, clean air and a thriving biodiversity, Switzerland invites you to travel lightly. Its sustainable strategy 'Swisstainable' extends right across the board, from an abiding commitment to climate and environmental change, the countrywide rollout of greener hydro-electric and solar power as well as recycling and waste management. This low-impact ethos extends to the conscientious curatorship of peerless natural landscapes and historic locations to preserve them for the enjoyment of future generations of Swiss nationals and visitors alike.

The public transport infrastructure is a dream with regional incentives and free travel passes, services that run on time and access to remote corners and mountain villages. With more than three million travel cards sold every year, explore the lakes and mountains with a low carbon footprint, thanks to the Swiss Travel Guide app valid on trains, boats and buses. Switzerland is also a cycling and walking paradise, with a co-ordinated network of trails and footpaths, inviting the visitor to stay longer and delve deeper into local culture, to experience nature up close and personal.

To plan your next visit head to: [MySwitzerland.com/GI](https://www.myswitzerland.com/GI)





Old-world charm of **Schloss Schadau (2)**; buzzing city life at **Hotel Schweizerhof Luzern (5)**; the relaxing terrace of **Villa Orselina (6)**; the gardens of **The Dolder Grand (9)**. Find details of these and many more at [MySwitzerland.com/GI](https://www.myswitzerland.com/GI)

Where to stay

With so many styles of accommodation – from historic hotels and rural guesthouses to timber-framed mountain lodges – you are spoilt for choice when it comes to finding your perfect Swiss base. Find these hotels or accommodation that suits you at [MySwitzerland.com/hotels](https://www.myswitzerland.com/hotels)

1 Bellevue Palace Bern

This elegant Art Deco hotel in the very heart of Switzerland's capital is next to the Swiss parliament, and its bars and Gault Millau-accredited restaurant are popular meeting places for politicians and journalists. It's also where visiting heads of state, including royalty, stay when in town.

2 Schloss Schadau

On the shores of Lake Thun, but still within easy reach of Bern, this boutique hotel is surrounded by parkland and is the perfect spot to unwind after a busy day exploring the capital.

3 Domaine de Châteauxvieux

This intimate country hotel, with a two-Michelin-starred restaurant and beautiful gardens, lies in the heart of Switzerland's wine-growing region on the banks of the Rhône but is just a short drive from central Geneva.

4 Hôtel Masson

Set on a hill with breathtaking views over Lake Geneva to the mountains beyond, Hôtel Masson is

within easy access of Lausanne. Part of the Swiss Historic Hotel network, its rooms pack plenty of fin-de-siècle charm.

5 Hotel Schweizerhof Luzern

This lakeside hotel has been owned by the Hauser family for 160 years and has welcomed Leo Tolstoy and Mark Twain among its guests. Today it houses 101 elegant rooms and suites.

6 Villa Orselina

Just ten minutes from the centre of Locarno, this luxury boutique hotel overlooking Lake Maggiore is the ideal spot to unwind.

7 Einstein St Gallen

In the buzzing centre of the university city, Einstein St Gallen is a stylish hotel that can boast its own two-Michelin-starred restaurant.

8 Sorell Hotel Krone

This boutique hotel in the heart of Winterthur's medieval Old Town is the perfect base for exploring Winterthur's many museums and restaurants, and for indulging in some retail therapy.

9 The Dolder Grand

Partly redesigned by Foster + Partners, this swish hotel near Zurich is the ultimate in luxury with a two-Michelin-starred restaurant, spacious rooms and suites, and a Japanese-inspired spa.

HOW TO GET HERE

By plane

Swiss International Air Lines (SWISS) – which has teamed up with myClimate to offer a voluntary carbon offset option – operates regular flights from London and other UK and Irish cities to Zurich and Geneva.

By train

For a more sustainable way to travel, Eurostar links up with two TGV lines from Paris to destinations across Switzerland.

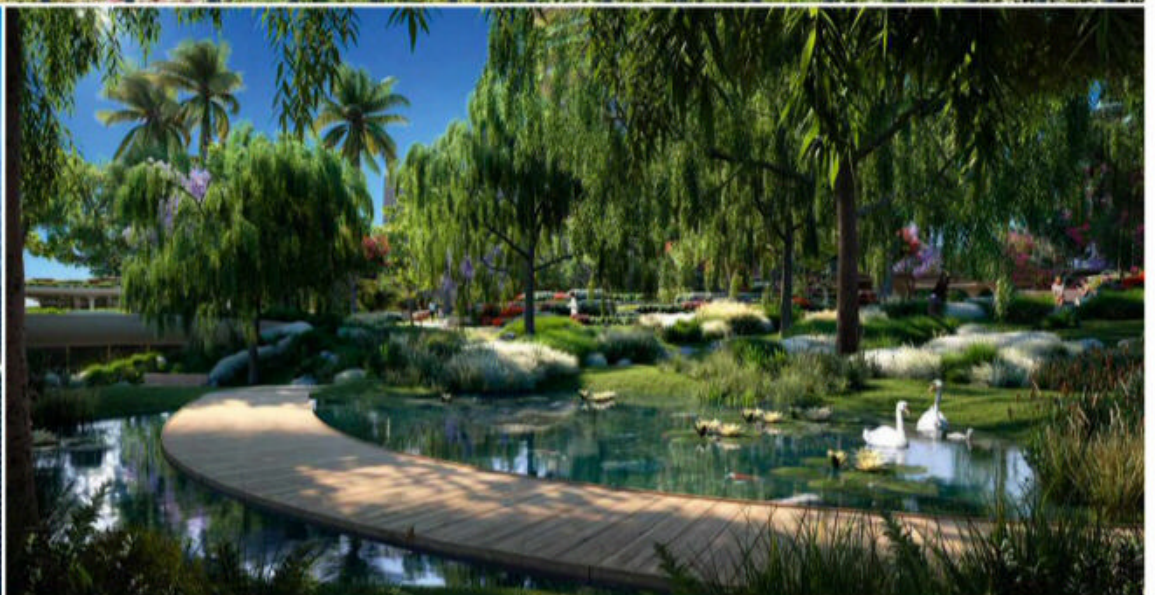
Swiss Travel Pass

This all-in-one ticket offers visitors to Switzerland unlimited travel by train, bus and boat for up to 15 days. Visit [switzerlandtravelcentre.com](https://www.switzerlandtravelcentre.com) for more details.

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Design

News and sourcebook



GREEN AT HEART

Foster + Partners has revealed the masterplan for One Beverly Hills, a new, mixed-use development within the metropolitan area of Los Angeles in California, USA. The site will include two plant-covered condominium towers set in an eight-acre green space planted with 40 trees and 250 plant species from California. Design collective RIOS will landscape the space, half of which will be open to the public. A mile of paths will weave through the gardens with their shady walkways and water features. At 125m and 112m, the residential towers are expected to be the tallest buildings in Beverly Hills. A third block will house a 42-room hotel plus 37 condominiums. fosterandpartners.com

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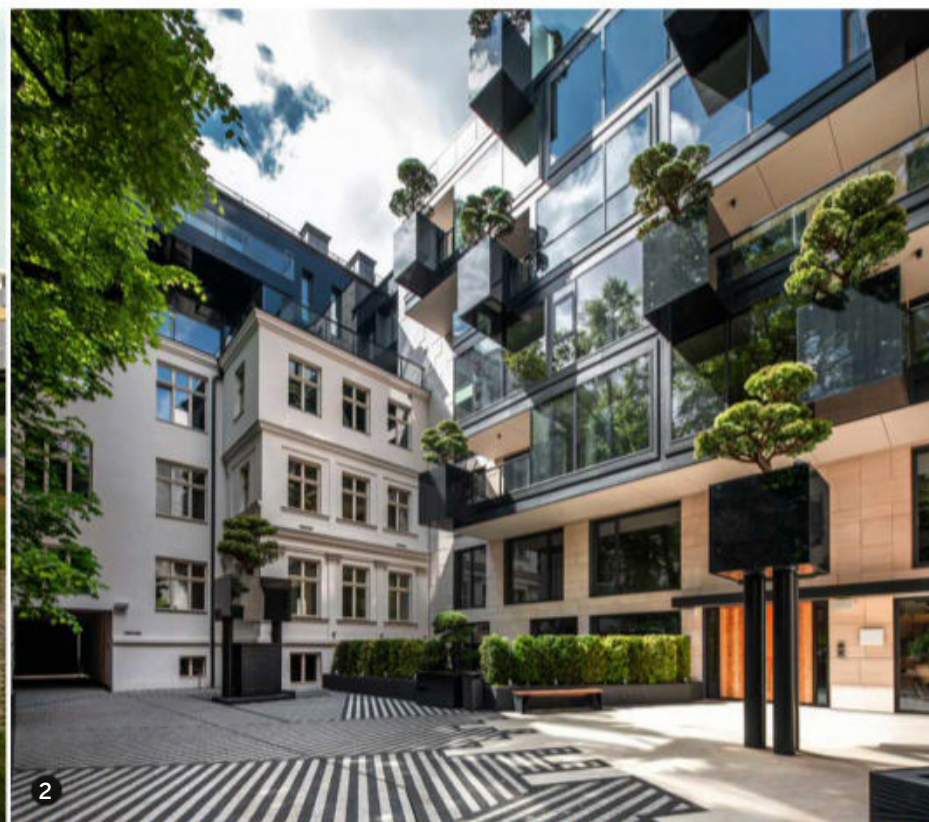


News

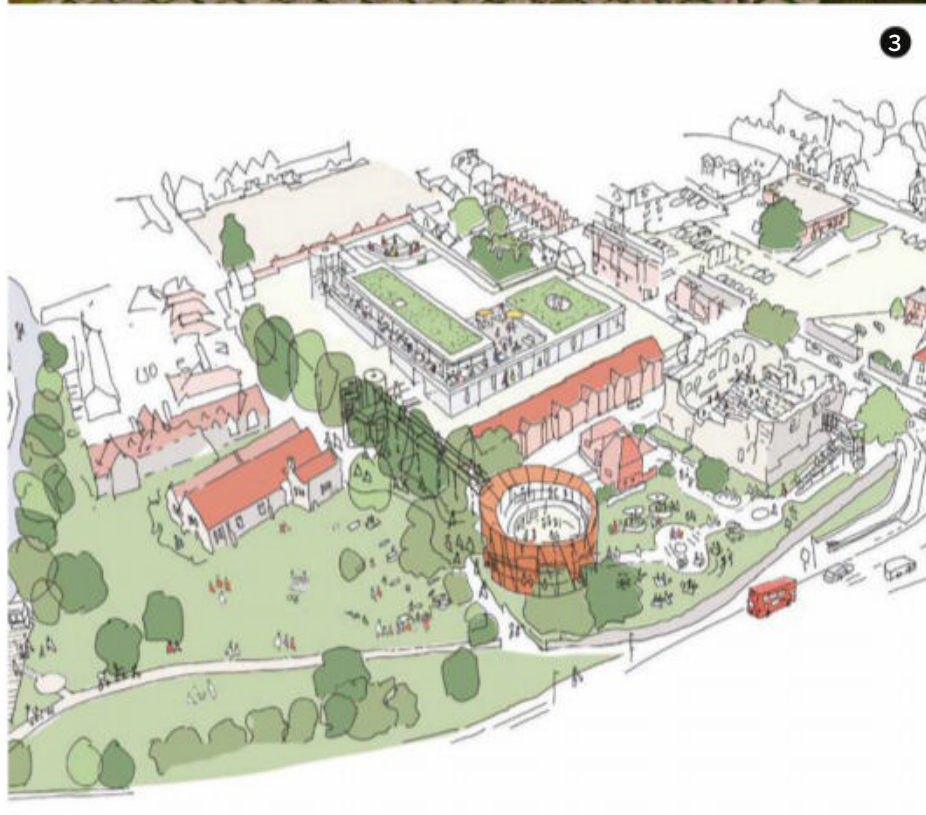
COMPILED BY ANNIE GATTI



1



2



3



4

1 ROOFTOP REFUGE

Danish studio Dorte Mandrup has designed a city-centre store with a public rooftop park that will provide much-needed green space in the centre of Copenhagen, Denmark. The design, for an IKEA store that is due to open in 2023, shows hundreds of native trees, shrubs and grasses on the 150m-long rooftop, with bug hotels for biodiversity. The rooftop will be accessed from the entrance plaza, another green space that will contain racks for hundreds of bikes, in response to the city's green vision for the future – Copenhagen aims to be carbon neutral by 2025.

dortemandrup.dk

2 HOUSE OF THE FLYING TREES

Latvian architecture studio Open AD has updated an Art Nouveau apartment building in the historical centre of Riga by adding two glass-fronted storeys, with cantilevered planters containing evergreen trees, to the original façade. The motif is repeated at the rear of the building, overlooking a courtyard, where the planters are filled with cloud-pruned conifers and bonsai trees, which appear to fly in front of the building. The same trees are used at ground level, at the courtyard entrance, which displays the distinctive black-and-white patterning also found inside the building. openad.lv

3 TALES OLD AND NEW

Hollaway Studio has been appointed architect for the Tales of England project in Canterbury, Kent. The scheme aims to link heritage destinations in the city synonymous with Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, which follows a group of medieval pilgrims on their journey to Canterbury Cathedral. Core visitor routes will include the Pilgrims Mile and a trail along the River Stour, and landscape designer Jo Thompson is proposing to transform a route along the city walls into a pollinator park. Dane John Gardens will be renovated, and Canterbury Castle ruins are set to become home to an open-air theatre. hollawaystudio.co.uk

4 GLASSHOUSE FULL

A former coal mine in northern China has been landscaped to form a park featuring hills and an artificial lake around three domed glasshouses. These huge structures form the centrepiece of Taiyuan Botanical Garden, designed by Austrian studio Delugan Meissl Associated Architects (DMAA). Consisting of curved, laminated timber beams arranged in intersecting layers, the domes provide optimal conditions for a tropical garden, desert planting and aquatic plants, and are linked by walkways that continue around the lake. The new park will also include a nature museum, research centre and restaurant. dmaa.at

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⑤ WIMBLEDON COMMUNITY CHAMPIONSHIP

The All England Lawn Tennis Club in Wimbledon has submitted a planning application to create a new 23-acre public park in the southwest London suburb. The Wimbledon Park Project will include a new 8,000-seat show court set in a ring of mature oaks (shown), and a further 38 new grass courts. It will also renovate and open to the public much of the tennis club's private 'Capability' Brown landscape, previously a golf course, and create a new connection between this and the existing public park. Plans include the planting of 1,500 new trees and protection of existing veteran trees. An historic lake will be desilted and a circular walk created around it. The architecture and planning will be by Allies and Morrison with landscape design by LUC. wimbledon.com



⑥ IN-VITRA GARDEN EXPERIENCE

A new garden designed by landscape designer Piet Oudolf and planted up last year has opened to the public at the campus of Swiss furniture makers Vitra in Weil am Rhein, Germany. The garden, covering about 4,000 square metres and filled with around 30,000 plants, links the buildings at the northern and southern parts of the campus, including a showroom designed by Herzog & de Meuron, the Vitra Design Museum, a gallery, interiors studio, shops and cafés. The site is designed around a series of paths that wind through immersive, seasonal planting. vitra.com

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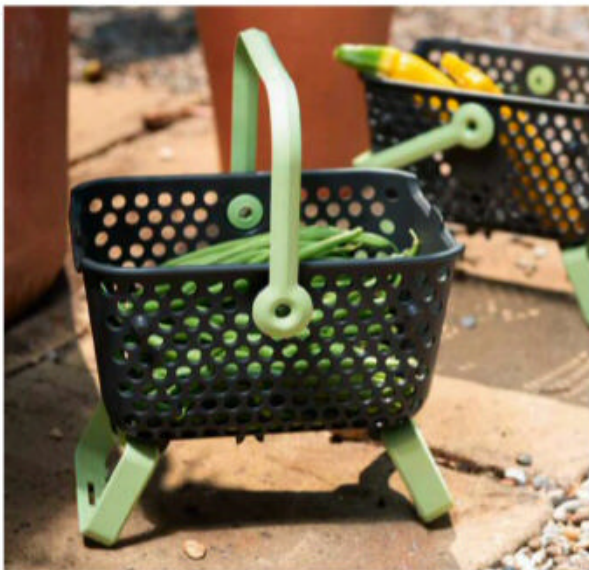
Lidney Sussex Trug,
£88, 57x31x30cm,
01276 451077, rowenandwren.co.uk

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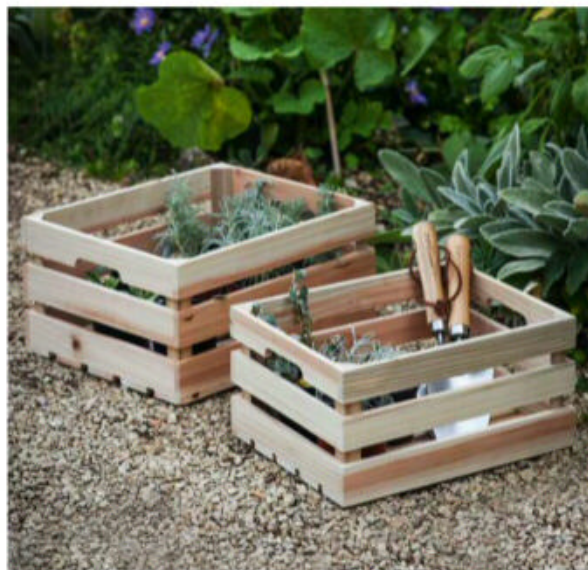
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PHOTOGRAPH BY JONATHAN BUCKLEY




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How it works

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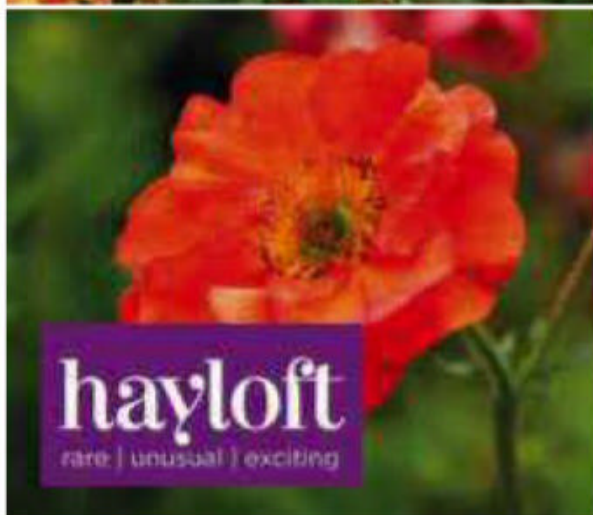
Click on the offer you're interested in to go to the dedicated page, where you'll also find all the terms and conditions.

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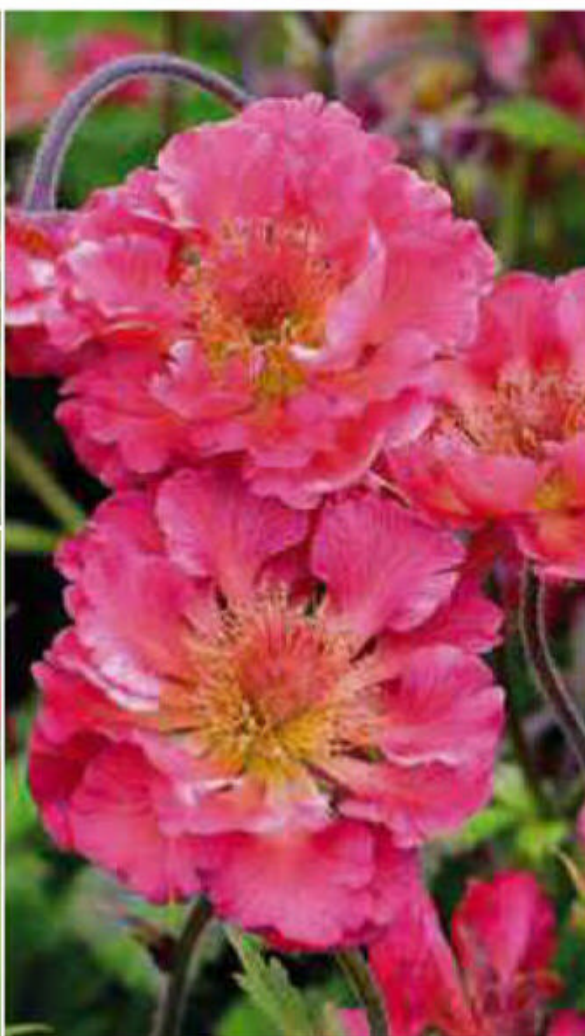
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Geums are known for their bright bold colouring – these hardy perennials are also appealing to bees! Here are three more plants that are super-attractive to bees.

1. Hardy geraniums – or cranesbills – are easy to grow, tough, and bloom profusely. Bees adore blue/purple colours, so try the attractive cultivar *Geranium Rozanne* (= 'Gerwat').

2. *Monarda*'s common name – bee balm – says it all. The aromatic 'bergamot' is a real bee magnet and swathes of it can be found at most RHS gardens, teeming with buzzing bees.



3. Pollinators love alliums and this includes the perennial herb, the chive – *Allium schoenoprasum*. A tasty addition to the kitchen garden, bees go crazy for the mauve flowerheads.

To redeem all of these offers and more, go to gardensillustrated.com/events-and-offers

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LONGEST-RUNNING WEST END SHOWS

It's deeply embedded in the national identity – a trip to see a West End musical. But what are the longest-running toe-tappers in West End history, by number of performances:

- *Les Misérables* – over 14,000 since 1985
- *The Phantom of the Opera* – nearly 14,000 since 1986
- *Blood Brothers* – around 10,000 from 1988[†]
- *Cats* – nearly 9,000 from 1981[†]
- *Mamma Mia!* – over 8,750 since 1999
- *Disney's The Lion King* (below) – over 8,500 since 1999
- *Starlight Express* – over 7,400 since 1984
- *Chicago* – nearly 6,200 since 1997 revival[†]
- *Wicked* – over 5,600 since 2006
- *Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story* – over 5,200 since 1989[†]



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*Source: According to Society of London Theatre, February 2020 [†]Now closed

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(1 day a week (Tues), 10.30am–3.15pm, over three terms)

GARDENING FOR BEGINNERS

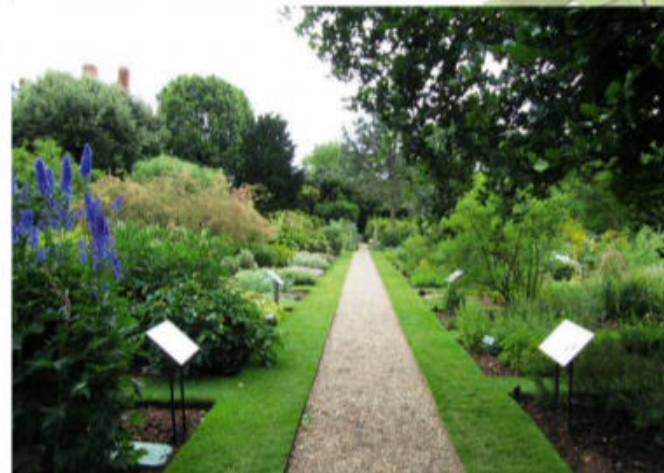
Wednesday & Thursday 20, 21, 27, 28 April 2022

One of our most popular courses, led by master horticulturist Ben Pope, which aims to take each student through all the practical elements of caring for a garden from soil, tools, maintenance, seed sowing and propagating, weed control and pests and diseases. The first 3 days will be spent at the Chelsea Physic Garden and the final day will be spent gaining practical experience in Rosemary Alexander's much praised garden near Petersfield and the garden nearby, where Ben is in charge. Participants will be given a chance to prune, plant, sow seeds and regular maintenance tasks will be discussed. A light lunch and refreshments will be provided daily.

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Garden of Medicinal Plants – Chelsea Physic Garden

Photo: R Alexander

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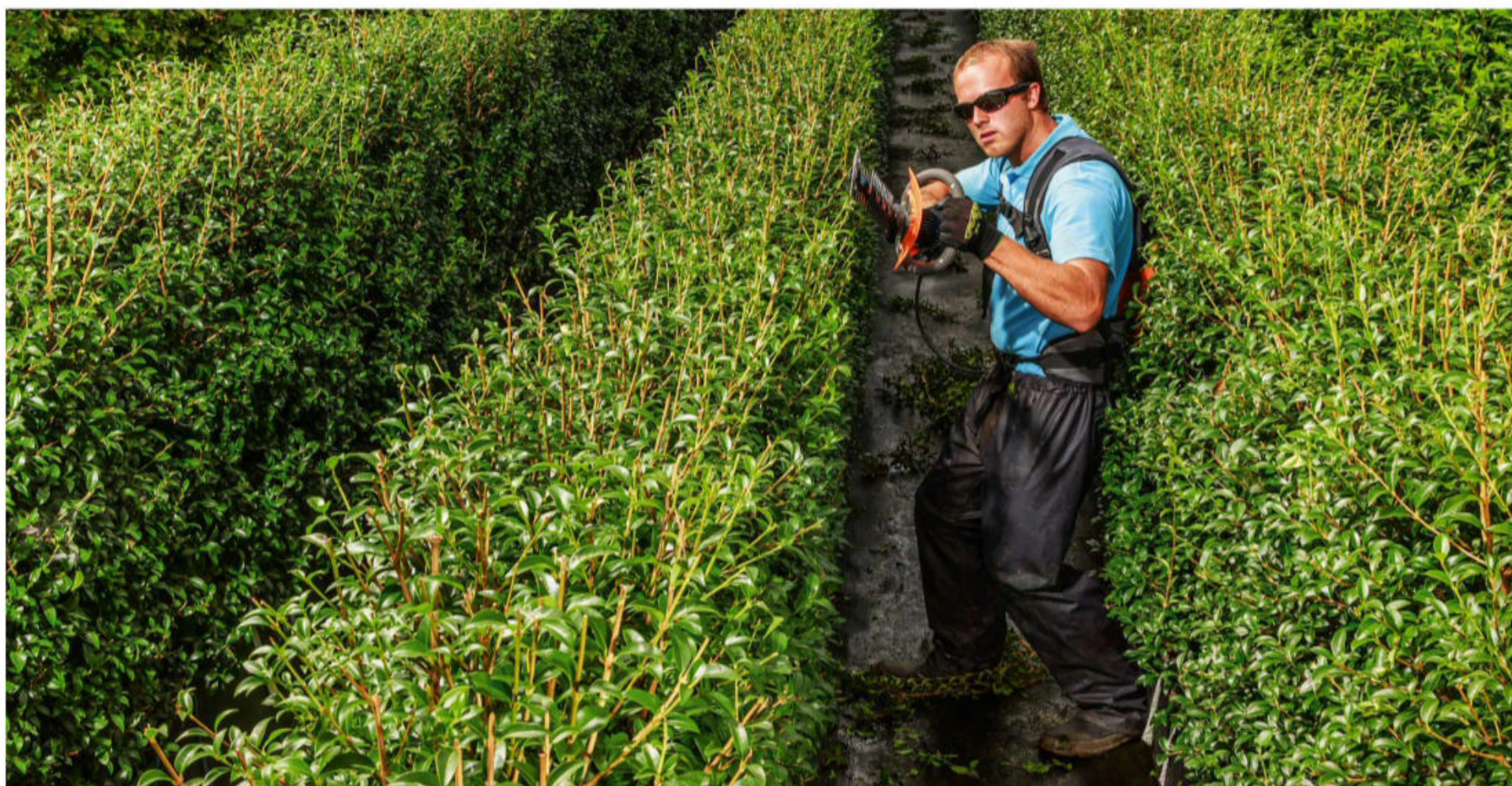
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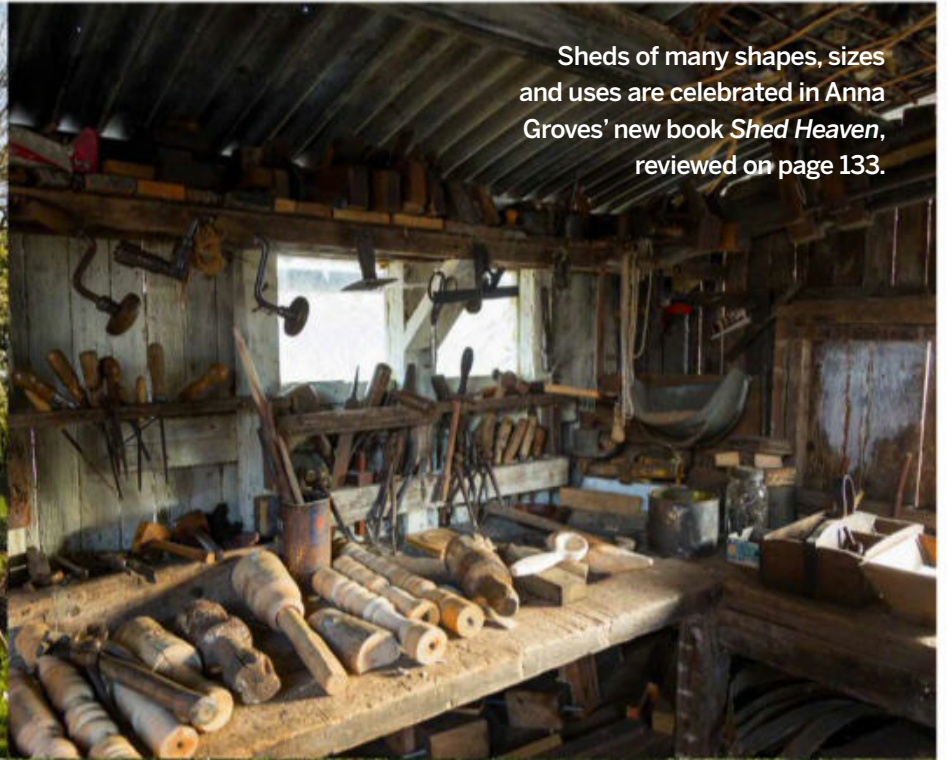
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DOWNTOOLS

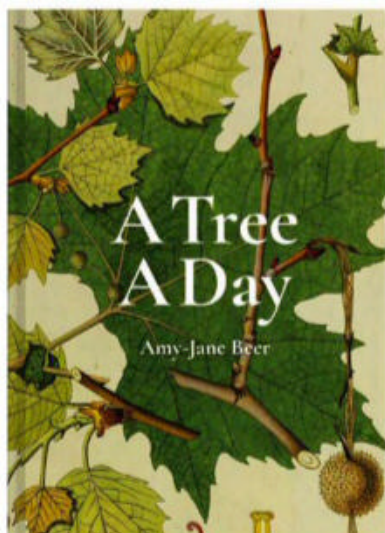
Book reviews, crossword, back issues, reader offer, a weekend in...



Sheds of many shapes, sizes and uses are celebrated in Anna Groves' new book *Shed Heaven*, reviewed on page 133.



ARNHEL DE SERRA, JOHN MILLER, CHRIS LACEY, NICK MEERS / ALL NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES.



A TREE A DAY

by Amy-Jane Beer

Pavilion Books, £20
ISBN 978-1849946520

No mere dry, academic work, but a treasure trove of creativity, this is a meditation on the beauty and power of trees to delight all nature lovers.

Reviewer Emily Males is a freelance writer.



REBUGGING THE PLANET

by Vicki Hird

Chelsea Green Publishing Co, £22
ISBN 978-1645020189

A call to arms to protect the world's insects and other invertebrates, but one that has a much wider focus than gardening.

Reviewer Ken Thompson is a botanist and garden writer.

What is the meaning of a tree? While at first glance this question seems rather obvious, Amy-Jane Beer explores the greater significance of these plants by tracing them throughout time and place. The 366 trees – one for each day of the year, even in a leap year – are exposed as objects with a multitude of meanings – fidelity, fantasy and wellbeing to name but a few.

From the ancient Major Oak of Sherwood Forest to the Chinese art of Penjing (miniature landscapes depicting artistically formed trees), the history of this taxonomic group is neatly condensed into a series of digestible snippets. We learn about the Tree of Hippocrates, the plane tree under which the Greek physician purportedly taught his pupils, and are treated to a kind of educational forest-bathe on the growing conditions of red mangroves.

Not every entry comprises a detailed description of a botanical specimen, however. Interspersed with these

accounts is a remarkable selection of poems, artworks and architecture that demonstrates how human experience is much more indebted to these plants than we might at first think. As a fine art lover, I particularly enjoyed the inclusion of artworks by Pissarro, Monet and Constable. The entry for 10 April on Monet's *Antibes in the Morning*, in which the artist bathes the waterside saplings in a magical, orange light, is an especially beautiful take on the niche genre of tree art. Stunning tree-inspired art of the Arts and Crafts and Chinoiserie movements also features, with illustrations of William Morris's Willow Bough design and the Willow pattern of English ceramics.

Whether you're a general reader or an avid tree lover, Amy-Jane Beer's meditative musings on nature's greatest creations are sure to appeal, leaving you to ask the much more personal question of 'What does a tree mean to you?'

Improving the world for bugs – everything from insects to rotifers and leeches (and ultimately humans too) – is the spur here for a book that really does want you to help save the planet. Insects and other invertebrates are not only crucial to the health of the planet, but are also a barometer of that health. Even if the quoted headline figure of 'over 40 per cent of the world's insects at risk of extinction' is a little too pessimistic, there's no doubt that insects are in trouble. So what can we do?

In attempting to answer that question, author Vicki Hird ranges far beyond invertebrates, taking aim at all the world's current ills: inequality, pesticides, industrial farming, climate change, plastics and food waste. There are plenty of suggestions for action, from the local – showing our children that the vast majority of bugs are both harmless and beautiful, planting a tree, flying less, buying local – to

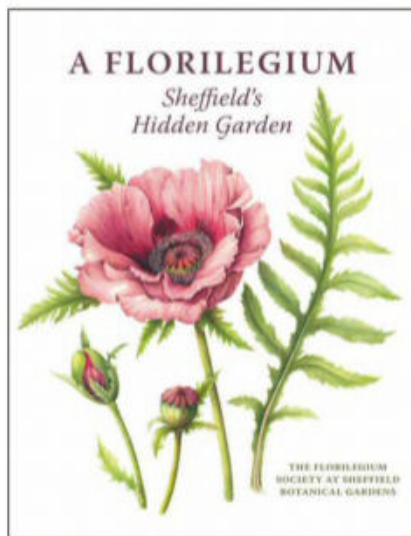
the global; there's a whole chapter on the basics of campaigning and lobbying.

The text is enlivened by fascinating bug facts, such as that the wings of the hummingbird hawk moth (surely the insect to get children to love bugs?) beat 85 times per second, that tardigrades can even survive in space, and that hungry bumblebees can persuade plants to flower earlier.

A bit surprisingly, since it's where most of us interact with nature on a daily basis, there isn't a specific chapter on gardening. But plenty of good gardening advice crops up in other chapters, including a short but useful list of wildlife-friendly plants. But a word of warning: the suggestion that our native yellow flag and white waterlily would be OK, even in a tiny pond, is likely to end in tears – they are too vigorous.

My favourite piece of advice is: 'Take some time out to see the bugs. Just sit still and they will come.' Not enough of us do that.

BOOK REVIEWS



A FLORILEGIUM: SHEFFIELD'S HIDDEN GARDEN

by Valerie Oxley with The Florilegium Society at Sheffield Botanical Gardens
Crowood Press, £25
ISBN 978-1785008948

An illuminating record of the treasures of Sheffield's Botanical Garden, recording the beauty and lifecycle of both native and exotic plants.

Reviewer Ambra Edwards is a writer and garden historian.

I have recently had the thrill of working with the historical collection of botanical illustrations held by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. So it is a delight to discover that the delicate art of botanical drawing continues to thrive, represented here by over 100 contemporary illustrations from the collection of The Florilegium Society at Sheffield Botanical Gardens.

Many of the contributors to the archive – all women – studied botanical illustration at Sheffield University. As this parent of a former Sheffield student can attest, the Botanical Gardens are as popular with visitors as with the city's residents.

The exotics in the pavilions are well represented, from colourful mandevillas and bristly banksias to the weird Australian grass tree, *Xanthorrhoea australis*, beautifully rendered by artist Cathrine Allsopp. But perhaps even more satisfying are the careful studies of familiar plants we may take for granted, whether dainty primroses or

lofty oaks. It is especially poignant to see Jo Edwards' drawing of our threatened native ash, *Fraxinus excelsior*. Most of the artists employ a mix of graphite pencil and watercolour, but a few monochrome pencil studies prove wonderfully expressive, such as Julie Small's rendition of the giant redwood, *Sequoiadendron giganteum*.

The text that accompanies each entry can read a little like a miscellaneous assortment of facts, its brevity sometimes leading to a distorted account of key historical figures or even errors (the naturalist Joseph Banks made not three but one visit to Australia, famously aboard HMS *Endeavour*). That aside, there is much to appreciate in the useful introductions to lesser-known collectors such as Henry Fletcher Hance and William Hudson, the excellent, brief accounts of processes such as buzz pollination, and the clear explanations of the often-convoluted taxonomy of featured plants.



SHED HEAVEN

by Anna Groves
Pavilion Books,
£9.99
ISBN 978-1911657019

An eloquent exploration of the creative, reflective and innovative space of the shed via some of the UK's most stunning landscapes.

Reviewer Katie Beale is editorial assistant at Gardens Illustrated.

Shed Heaven is a poignant tour around Britain's quirkiest outdoor structures – the sheds, summer houses, huts and dens that have inspired some of the country's most prominent names in art, literature and science.

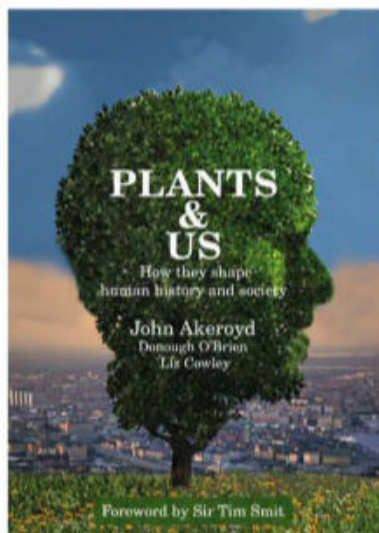
A Place For Everything makes for a perfect opener, covering the gardener's shed at the National Trust's Hidcote Manor, a former packing shed used during the daffodil harvests in Devon's Tamar Valley, and the magnificent boat sheds made out of redundant fishing boats on Holy Island, Northumberland.

As a keen writer, I was particularly interested in the section on creative spaces, including George Bernard Shaw's fascinating Hertfordshire shed, which could be rotated throughout the day to make the most of the sun. The entry on Virginia Woolf's writing shed at Monk's House in East Sussex, provides a thoughtful insight into how the prolific writer spent her creative time, and we also get

a glimpse inside the shed in St Ives, Cornwall, in which the artist Barbara Hepworth liked to take a nap. The following section, The Inside Out, introduces some of the UK's most beautiful beach huts, bird hides and coastguard's huts, alongside commentary on their historical significance.

To finish, it seems pertinent to draw on the book's introduction, where Anna Groves cites the definition of shed as found in *Chambers Dictionary*: a structure for storage or shelter. In plain terms, this is indeed the purpose of a shed. However, with many of us having spent more time in our homes, gardens and even sheds during the global pandemic of the past year, we can appreciate the need for a tranquil space for reflection and inspiration. I'd like to think that this book will encourage readers to view the shed as a safe, creative environment in which to shelter from an uncertain world, surrounded by the beauty of the garden.

BOOK REVIEWS



PLANTS & US: HOW THEY SHAPE HUMAN HISTORY AND SOCIETY

by Dr John Akeroyd, Donough O'Brien and Liz Cowley

GB Publishing Org, £14.99
ISBN 978-1912576760

A comprehensive, absorbing and entertaining overview of the richly diverse stories of plants and their impact on our everyday lives.

Reviewer Matthew Biggs is a Kew-trained gardener and presenter.

This impressive book is divided into 13 sections containing plant profiles and historic overviews detailing how plants from all over the world affect all aspects of our lives. It covers a diverse range of subjects from plants as heroes (mainly in medicine) to their role in eating and drinking (including the origins of baked beans and the unintended consequences of Prohibition) and in the arts, architecture and decoration (William Morris patterns, for example).

The section Plants on Parade contains 'must-visit' gardens and their histories, including notable botanical gardens such as Kirstenbosch, Kew and Missouri, while recent projects such as Singapore's Gardens by the Bay and the ecological conservation park Noah's Ark in South Africa, ensure that the book remains current. It is also delightfully quirky in parts. Topics such as the history of walking and other 'sticks', plant-based boys' names and an imaginary conversation littered with

plant-based insults ensure a constant stream of interesting facts and humour alongside poems and personal comments. Lighter moments also reveal the origins of the shape of the croissant and word grenade (so-called because of its pomegranate shape) – enough material for a lifetime of plant-based quizzes. There are also fascinating, sometimes shocking revelations, notably of two unsung heroes in the development of penicillin and the little-known story of white Irish slaves on sugar plantations.

As well as being a thoroughly enjoyable read, the book delivers a more serious message. The section Plants in Peril – which includes a discussion of the impact of the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa*, the desertification of the Aral Sea and the environmental damage caused by palm oil production – is a clarion call for conservation and action. Above all, this book drives home one irrefutable fact: without plants, we would not survive.

Other books

From the reflective to the practical, this month's additional books include a tribute to a design giant and tips on indoor gardening.



BOTANICA

by Marc Jeanson, Florence Tessier and Serge Muller

Editions Flammarion, £22.50,
ISBN 978-2080204141

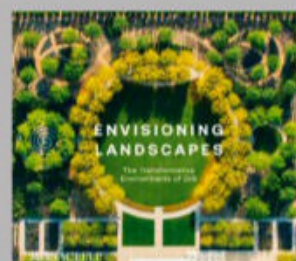
A testimonial to the herbarium in the French National Museum of Natural History, documenting centuries of botanical specimens.



THE KEW GARDENER'S GUIDE TO GROWING TREES

by Tony Kirkham,
Frances Lincoln, £12.99,
ISBN 978-0711261983

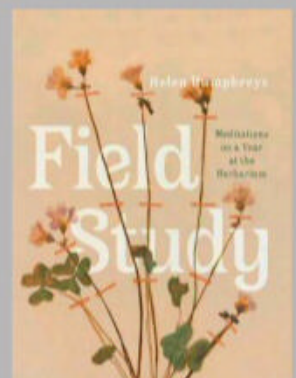
Expert advice from Kew tree expert Tony Kirkham on growing and planting trees with descriptions of ones suitable for every size of garden.



ENVISIONING LANDSCAPES

by OJB,
Monacelli Press, £40,
ISBN 978-1580935678

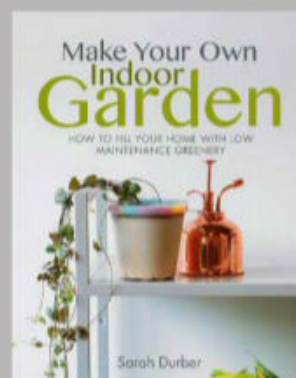
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FIELD STUDY

by Helen Humphreys,
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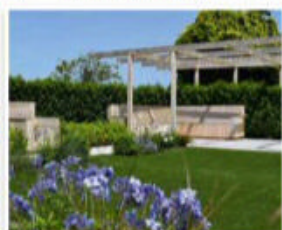
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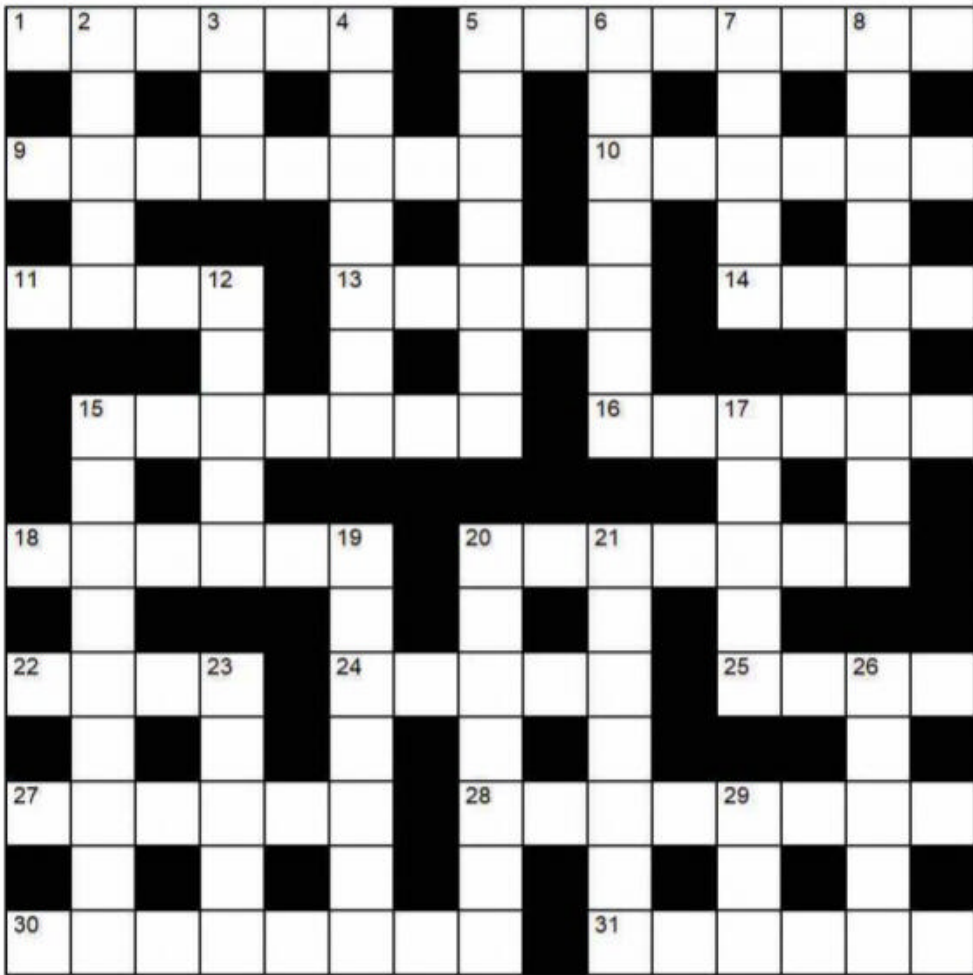


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Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Genus of pond plant, 'Sweet flag' – sort of herbaceous (hebe excluded) (6)
5 The honeywort genus – the nicer variety! (8)
9 Edible nuts of *Corylus maxima* (8)
10 Genus of deadly nightshade – a version of op art! (6)
11 Evergreen trees, popular with topiarists (4)
13 Carol ____, gardening expert, TV presenter and author (5)
14 Aromatic culinary plant (4)
15 Light-yellow narcissus with orange corolla – produces sucrose (7)
16 Trim conifer? (6)
18 Flat-topped flower clusters of eg cow parsley (6)
20 A fruit tree's efflorescence (7)
22 Eg a wire support for a tunnel cloche (4)
24 Flax genus – hidden by annual in umbellifers (5)
25 See 19 down
27 An F1 aubergine with glossy, round fruits – I got to move! (6)
28 *Allium scorodoprasum*'s common name – found in Sevenoaks and Lee, Kent (4,4)
30 Genus of a (usually) blue-flowering Alpine plant (8)
31 A white-flowered rhododendron Gary's moved around start of October (6)

• Solutions to this issue's crossword will be printed in the October issue

SOLUTION TO AUGUST ISSUE'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS 1 Grub 4 Cranesbill 9 Whopper 10 Waters 11 Elan 12 Reeds 14 Cassis 16 Spitfire 18 Veratrum 21 Styra 22 Sage 25 Buds 26 Throat 27 Alonsoa 28 Knot garden 29 Lily. DOWN 2 Rowallane 3/13/24 Brown-eyed Susan 4 Cyperus 5 Airless 6 Elwesii 7 Butterfly 8 Large 15 Snakeroot 17 Roald Dahl 19 Rosetta 20 Mustard 21 Sundown 23 Ashen 25 Basal.

DOWN

- 2 Herb of the *Allium* genus – cold, initially, by bee colony (5)
3 Make fun of a leaf's main vein? (3)
4 Gets a cutting to root – refuses to work! (7)
5 Also known as 'Mexican asters' – comes as arranged (7)
6 Genus of buckthorn – makes man rush off (7)
7 ____ Lindsay: she was an influential, inter-war, socialite garden designer (5)
8 Genus of plant commonly called St John's wort (9)
12 Reproductive cell of a fern (5)
15 Like the flowerhead of a daisy – ie compost mixture (9)
17 Flowers associated with Damask and China? (5)
19/25 Commonly called 'agretti', its leaves are edible – as Oslo salad, perhaps (7,4)
20 Genus of plants in Proteacea family named after planthunter Joseph (7)
21 Genus of plant called flowering fern or royal fern (7)
23 Named series of dwarf hibiscus... means little to the French! (5)
26 Apply eg manure (5)
29 Eg fallen tree trunk (3)

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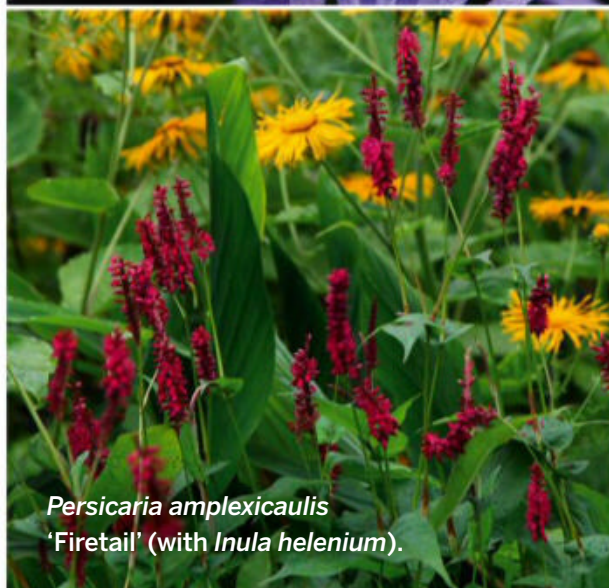
crocus



Aster x frikartii 'Mönch'.



Crocosmia 'Lucifer'.



Persicaria amplexicaulis
'Firetail' (with *Inula helenium*).



Miscanthus sinensis
'Kleine Fontäne'.



Helenium 'Moerheim Beauty'.



Rudbeckia fulgida var.
sullivantii 'Goldsturm'.



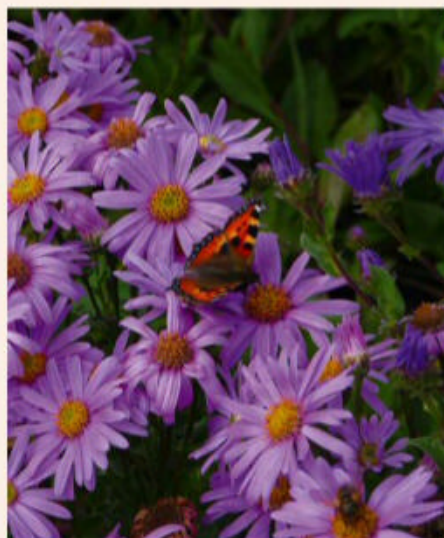
Symphyotrichum 'Little Carlow'.



Echinacea pallida.

Autumn nursery guide

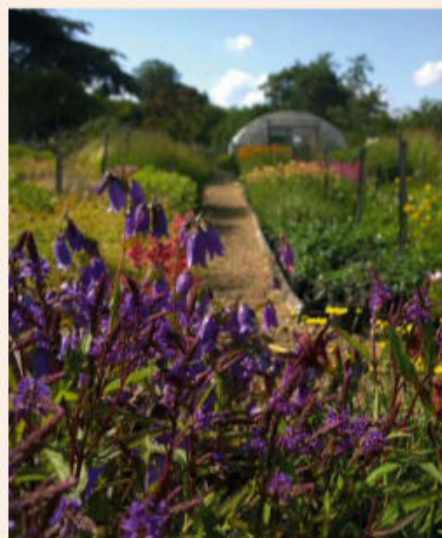
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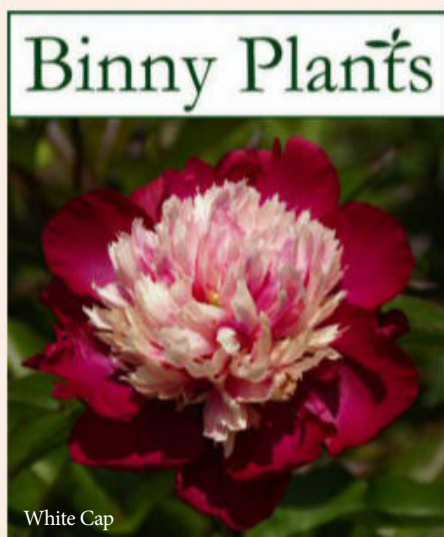
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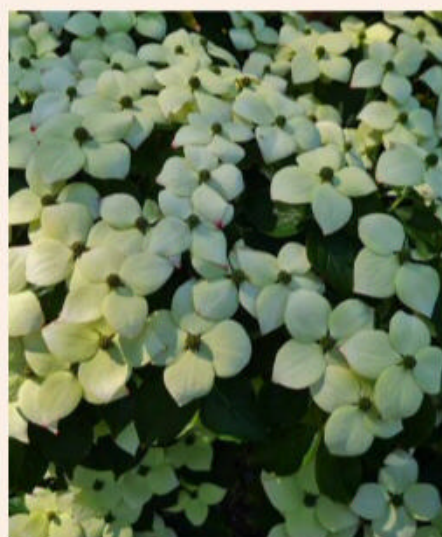
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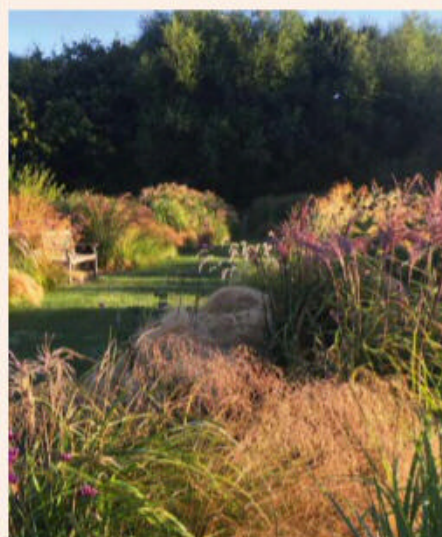
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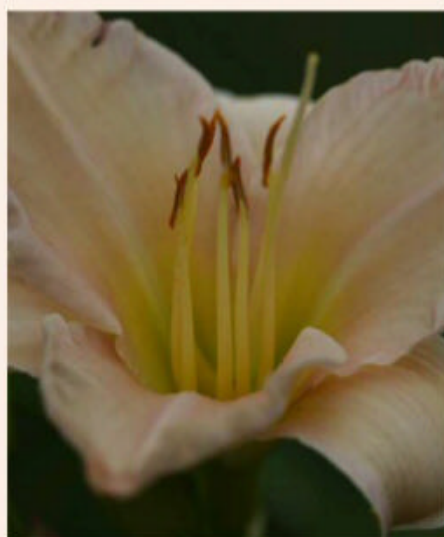
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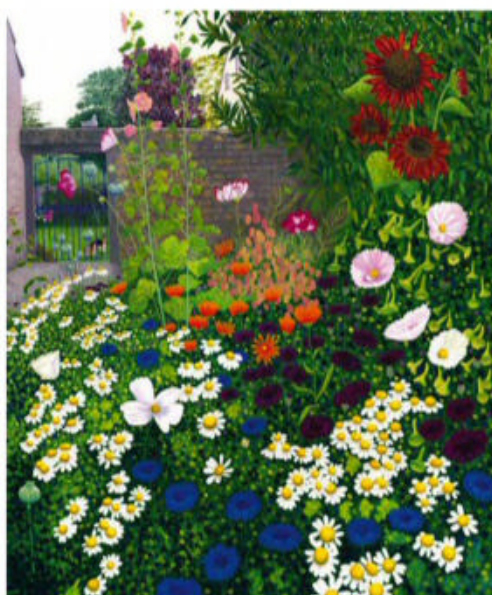


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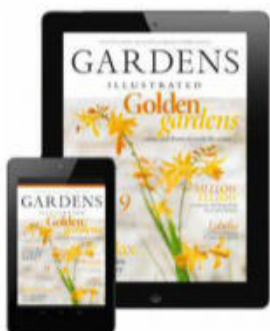
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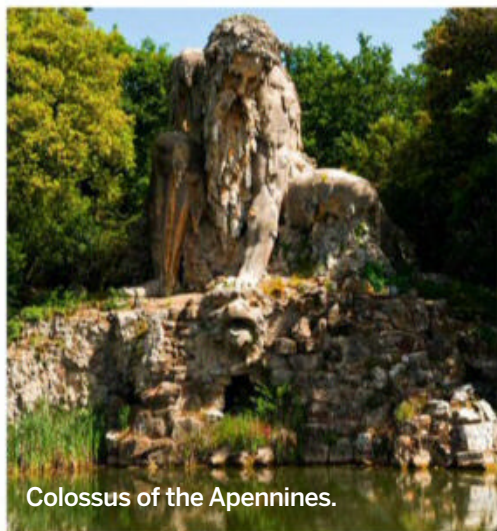
Florence and Lucca

Where to start with Italy's stunning landscapes? Perhaps by focusing on a region and its food festivals – in this case, the area in and around two of the most-loved cities in Tuscany

The non-stop celebrations of Tuscan produce in autumn range from September's homage to mushrooms and wild boar with polenta in the wine region of Carmignano, to widespread feasts of figs, honey and white truffles. October brings renewed festivities, in honour of the new season's olive oils, wines and chestnuts..

Hills of Florence

The medieval municipality of **Vaglia**, is home to the feast of the blackberry as well as **Villa Demidoff**, one of the most atmospheric gardens around Florence. Part of its romance lies in the sense of what might have been: a Medicean park of novelties and amusements was swept away for an English-style landscape garden. Remnants include the Colossus of the Apennines sitting atop a grotto. The park, which is also a nature reserve, is free of charge. Nearby, on the 12-mile **Anello del Rinascimento** (Renaissance Ring Trail), is the **Villa**



Colossus of the Apennines.

Souvenirs

Best baroque garden stay

Palazzo Pfanner, near Lucca

Best wine tasting and lunch

Fattoria del Teso, Montecarlo (10 miles east of Lucca)

Best passeggiata (promenade)

The medieval walls around Lucca

Best ice cream near a museum

Carapina, Florence (between the Uffizi Gallery and the Ponte Vecchio)

Best panino

Da Nerbone, Piazza del Mercato Centrale, Florence

family. The resort's organic farm and hunting reserve inspire much of the seasonal menu. The hilly **Mugello** region to the northeast of Florence is characterised by native forests, and coppiced chestnut is a feature of the woodland around the convent of

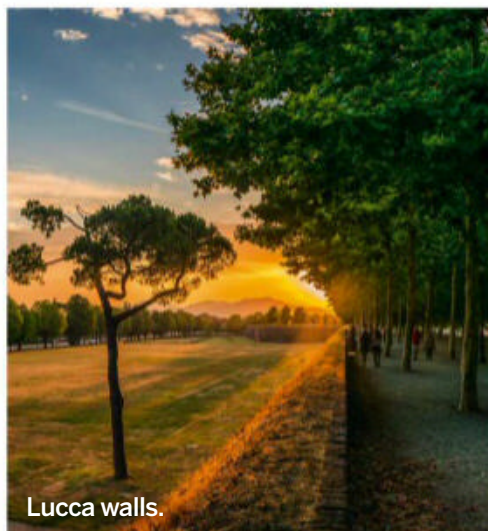


Mugello region.

Monte Senario, at 800m above sea level. In Florence itself, the first floor of the indoor **Mercato Centrale** has been reconfigured as a destination for gourmet food, representing the best of Italy. The Chianti wine booth represents a Tuscan wine but otherwise the market is divided into food types from all over the country. Cheese, bread and ice cream are made on the premises.

Looking at Lucca

Fifty miles east towards the Tyrrhenian Sea, the inner core of Lucca is surrounded by a pristine, fortified wall. Planted with trees, it makes a good promenade over the city. Much is packed within the old city boundary, including the remains of a Roman amphitheatre,



Lucca walls.

layered with medieval and later additions, to form an elliptical piazza (Piazza dell'Amfiteatro). At **Piazza San Francesco**, a highly regarded farmers' market convenes every Wednesday, between 4pm and 7.30pm. The food is local, organic or biodynamic. Across the square, **Ristorante il Mecenate** takes the local food experience a step further, serving up regional produce with expertise. Backing on to the city walls, the old botanical garden (**Orto Botanico di Lucca**) presides over



Palazzo Pfanner.

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On the road of wine and oil

Clusters of producers can be found on the so-called Wine and Oil Road (**Strada del Vino e dell'Olio**), an excellent way to discover the region through food and drink, and this could be combined with historic villa-visiting. **Villa Reale di Marlia** has a spectacular array of gardens, including a theatre of yew built in the mid-17th century and the **Lemon Garden**, which appears in watercolours and oil paintings by John Singer Sargent. **Villa Torrigiani** is classic baroque, and **Villa Mansi**, a pink palace of the Renaissance, is nearby. Towards the mountains north of Lucca, a 45-minute drive will take you to the hilltop town of **Barga** and its antique market, held on the second weekend of every month. Back in town, Lucca hosts two annual flower shows: **Murabilia**, in September, and **VerdeMura** in April.

COMPILED BY KENDRA WILSON. PHOTOGRAPHS: DOMENICO TONDI/ALAMY; EVGENI FABISUK/TOMASZ KORYL; ESCAPE THE OFFICE/JOEY/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO.

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